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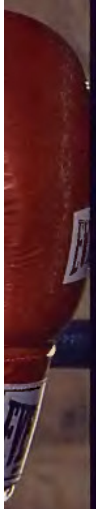

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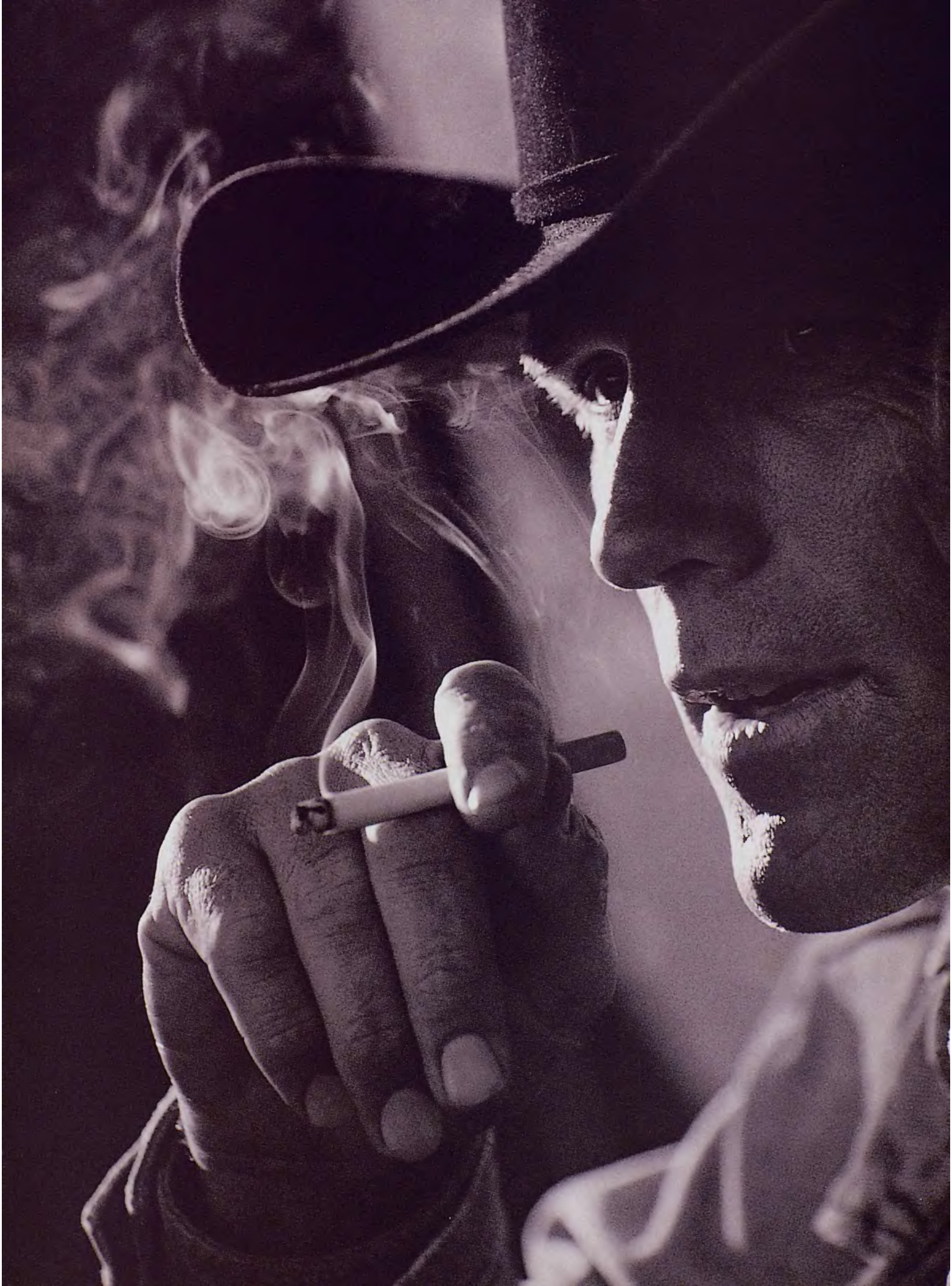

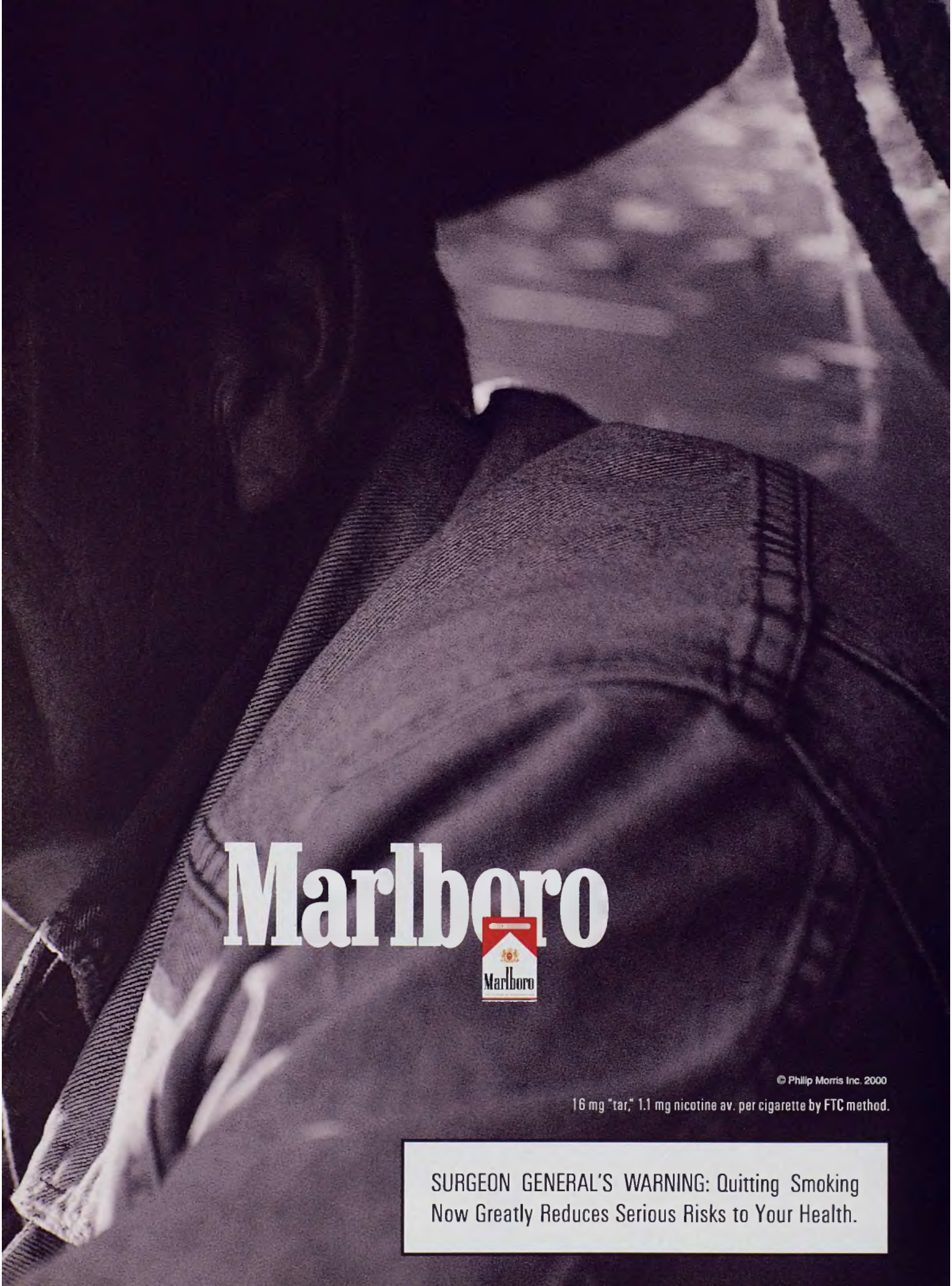

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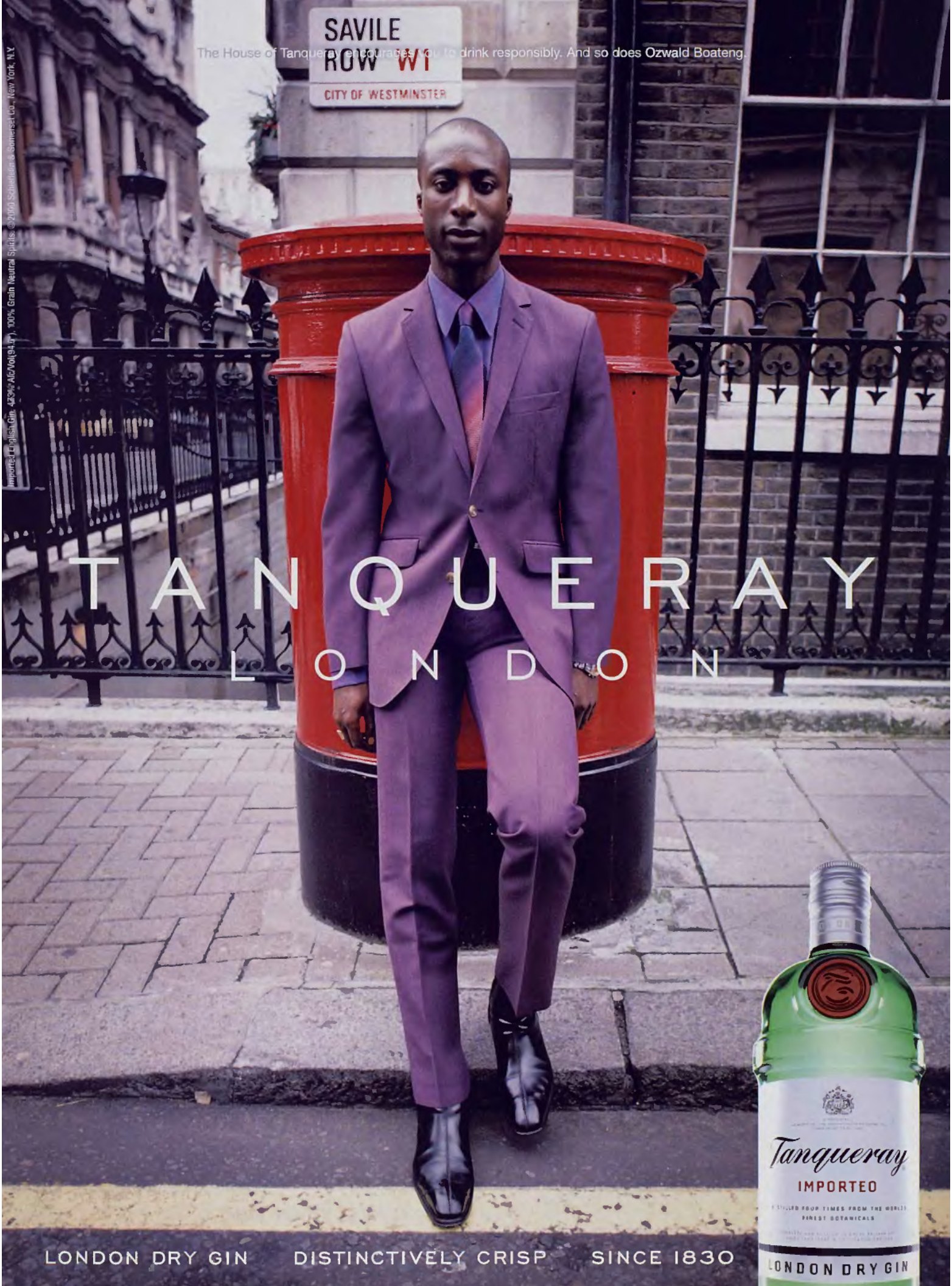
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Playbill

WHAT'S MORE WORTHY of male admiration than a Bentley? Two Bentleys, of course. That's right. **Mandy** and **Sandy Bentley,** one half of Hef's favorite foursome, two fifths of the Mansion's latest love knot, are having a coming-out party. Their pictorial, shot by **Stephen Wayda,** is a long-overdue gift. We forgot the wrapping—hope you don't mind.

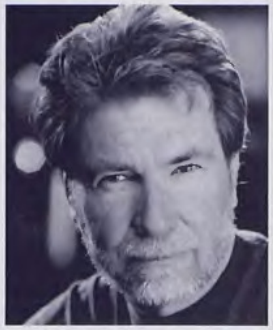
Continuing our double play, we have the Hit King himself on the roster. Everyone knows **Pete Rose's** stats: 4256 hits and one lifetime ban. Since his selection to the All-Century Team and TV reporter Jim Gray's postaward beaning, Rose's treatment by major league baseball is under even more scrutiny. Now, in a ballsy *Playboy Interview* by **Mark Ribowsky,** Rose goes after the banners the way he went after Bud Harrelson. Statman **Bill James** is to numbers what Rose is to hits. His innovative approach to quantifying speed and defense even helps teams reconfigure lineups. We coaxed him away from his equations for a rare discourse, *In Defense of Pete Rose*. Head to the ballparks this year but take care in the parking lots—juiced balls are flying out of the stadiums. Atlanta fans will be pleased to hear that the Yankees will crumble this year. According to *Playboy's 2000 Baseball Preview* by our in-house sultans of stats, **Leopold Froehlich** and **George Hodak,** it's a Braves new world. The artwork is by **Mike Benny.**

When it comes to sport of an indoor sort, heavy hitters are constantly refining their technique. In *Tantric Sex* by **Amanda Green,** an intrepid young lady and her husband tackle Splitting the Bamboo and Congress of the Crow. It's a hilarious and hopeful exploration of exotic positions and their payoff. (**Brian Rhea** did the illustrations.) Sex between the ears often starts on the phone. In this month's *Single Life* column, **Brian Preston** shares his close encounters of the aural kind. Turns out you don't have to get rejected to feel used.

"Cunnilingus and psychiatry brought us to this," says Tony Soprano. These days, who doesn't identify with the capo di tutti cable? Since Prohibition, the Mafia has provided an alter ego for every era. *Don't Worry, We Only Kill Each Other* is a full-color package by **Jamie Malanowski,** proof that mobsters such as Gas Pipe Casso and Mad Sam DeStefano are more bumbling and bloody than the *gavones* on-screen. Speaking of fiction, *Old Soldiers* by **Brendan DuBois** (art by **Kent Williams**) will transport you to a three-way blood feud in rural Maine. It's spy versus spy versus the company—a real barnstormer.

Michael Palin is a wonderful companion. In three journeys for the BBC, he has ringed the globe with trademark English humor, derring-do and eating don'ts. On the eve of his next project—stalking Hemingway—he sat with **Warren Kalbacker** for a *20 Questions* and a silly walk or two.

If you prefer to travel by bike, take a look at Senior Staff Writer **James R. Petersen's** preview of concept cycles, *Showstoppers*. The next-generation Ninjas put Einstein's theories of speed and light to the test track. From two-stroke engines to four-stroke fairways: When it comes to life, liberty and the pursuit of a tiny, dimpled ball, the athletes have taken over. Today, golf is a sport, damn it. Or so says **Ben Wright.** He's our favorite golf pro and we're showcasing his work in a new column, *Golf*. For those of us who play for the 19th hole, there's *The Best Bars in America*. In it, **Gerry Dawes** gives a mouth-watering tour of saloons picked by our critics. Then on to Playmate **Brooke Berry.** This Berkeley student uses a vocabulary we've come to expect from undergrads at a top school: "Harder, faster, deeper." Hey—that's our favorite conjugation.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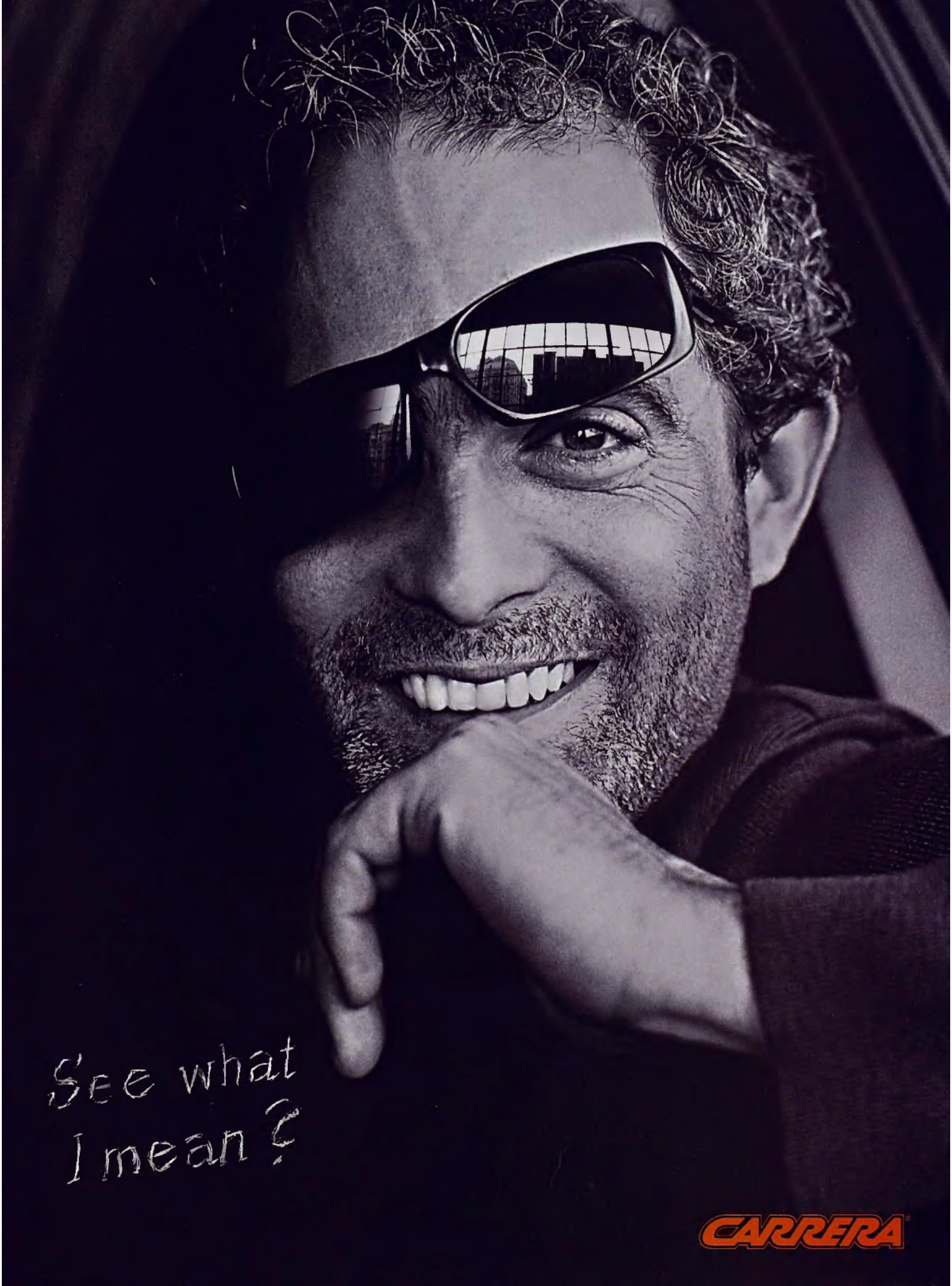
See what
I mean?
CARRERA

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It's a double-barreled treat this month as our spectacular pair take a time-out at the Mansion to show what all the fuss is about. Hef found them at the Garden of Eden (it could easily have been heaven). Stephen Wayda photographed the twins. Our Rabbit loves to neck.

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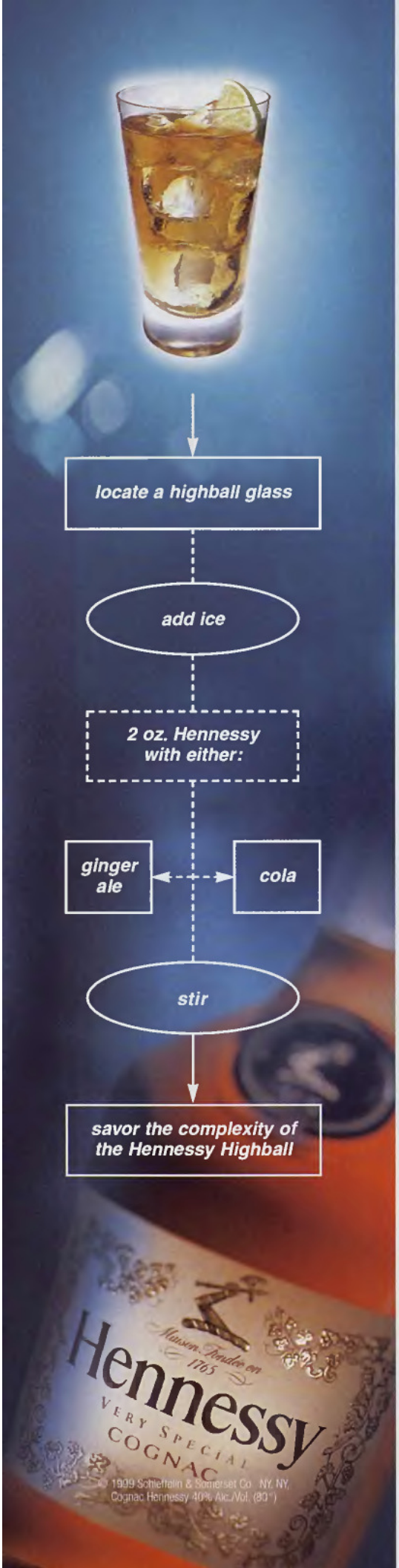

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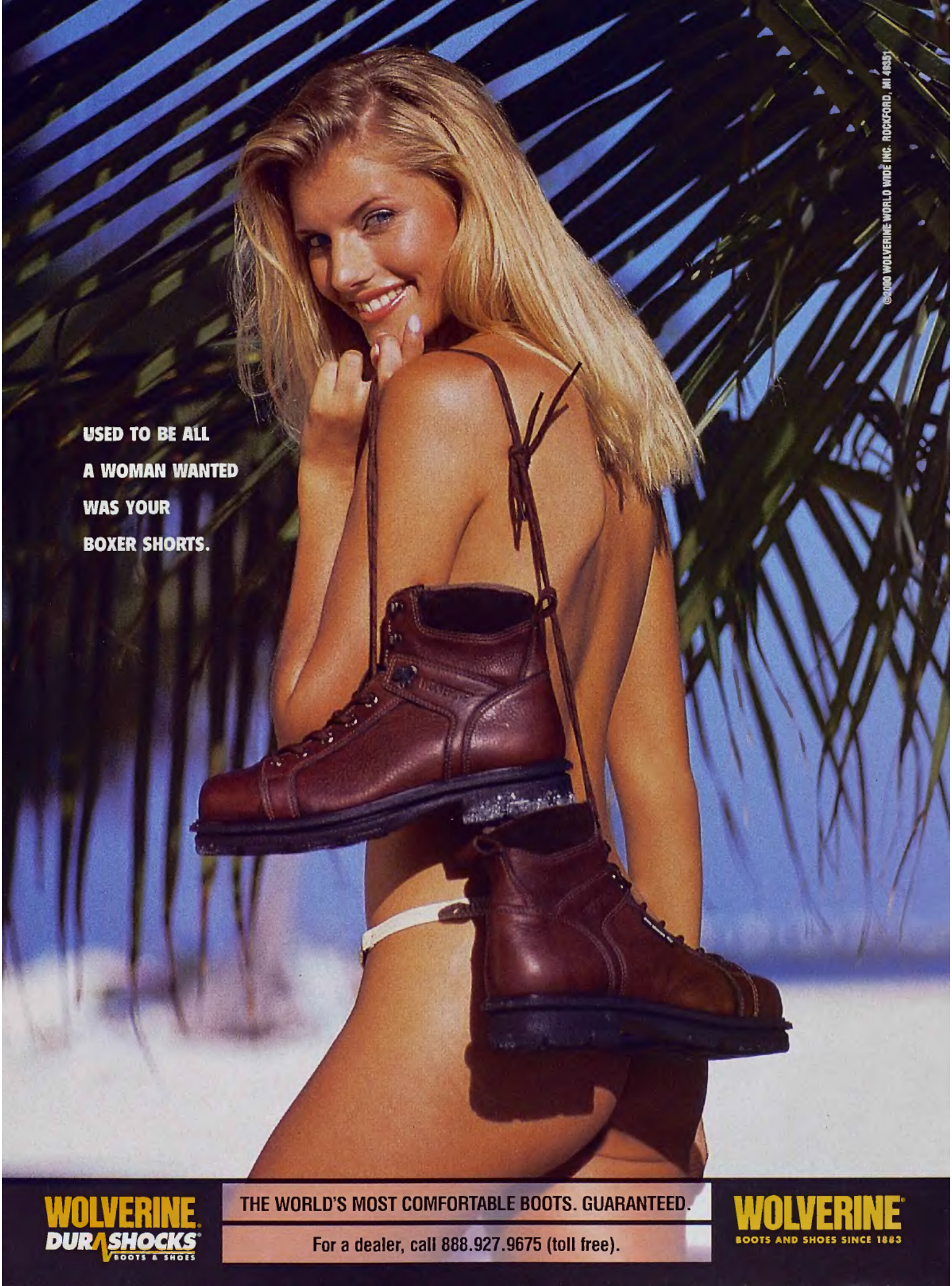

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LEADERS OF THE FREE WORLD

Hef actually put on a tie to have breakfast with President Clinton at a fund-raiser for the Democratic National Committee. We wish we could have eavesdropped.

BADGERS AT THE BUNNY HUTCH

The University of Wisconsin football team toured the palace of cool the day after their Rose Bowl victory. The Mansion has a tradition of hosting Big Ten teams, and this was the second year in a row the Badgers came up roses.

THEY COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT

Hef, surrounded by Jessica, Mandy and Sandy (above), threw his annual New Year's Eve bash—only this time the revelers welcomed a new millennium. The Go-Go Dancers wore nothing but paint (above left). Limp Bizkit front man Fred Durst explained the finer points of *Nookie* to Playmate Jaime Bergman (right). Verne "Mini-Me" Troyer celebrated his birthday (left), but there was nothing small about this night.

THE YEAR OF THE RABBIT

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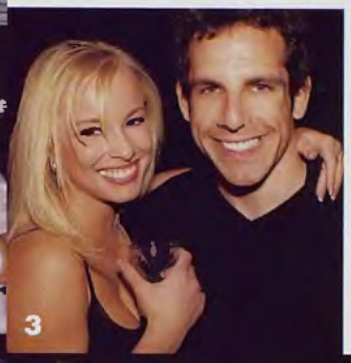
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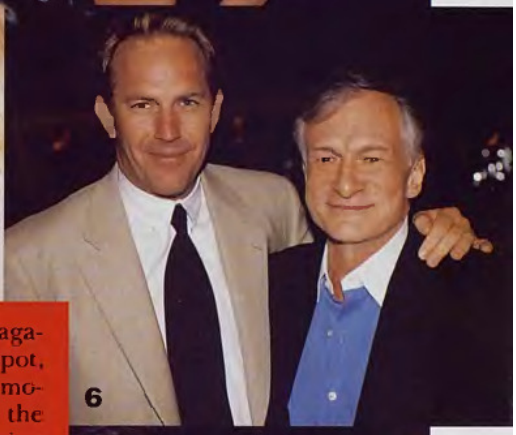
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It was a banner year for Hef and his magazine. The Mansion is LA's hottest nightspot, and Hollywood celebrities add to the atmosphere. (1) Kevin Spacey welcomes in the New Year with the man. (2) A quiet evening at home with Jessica, Mandy, Brande and Sandy means flannel pajamas and a big warm bed. (3) Jaime Bergman and bud Ben Stiller. (4) Warren Beatty and Verne Troyer. (5) Hef and Brande know there's something about Cameron Diaz. (6) Kevin Costner helps Hef celebrate his birthday. (7) Tim Allen and Barbara Moore share a laugh. (8) Jeff Goldblum and Gwyneth Paltrow are all smiles. (9) James Woods in good company with models Carmen Kass and Frankie Rayder. (10) Rena Mero comes to call. (11) Yo, Hef! It's Sly Stallone! (12) Crack-up Drew Carey and India Allen. (13) Who's funnier—Jim Carrey or Jon Lovitz? (14) *American Beauty*'s Thora Birch shows her Playboy pride.

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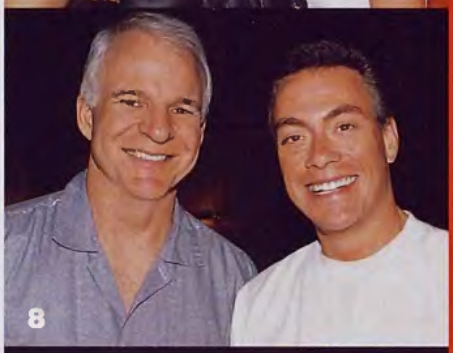
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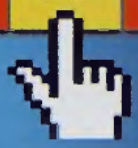
(1) Shiny, happy Playmates Jodi Ann Paterson and Layla Roberts and friend. (2) Jack and Hef agree it doesn't get better than this. (3) Angela Little puts Heather Kozar in a kinky headlock. (4) Billy Idol feels no pain with Echo Johnson and Julie Cialini. (5) *Angel* stars David Boreanaz and Glenn Quinn. (6) The gang shares a moment with Madonna and Chris Rock. (7) Life's a beach for Leo and Julie McCullough. (8) Steve Martin and Jean-Claude Van Damme. (9) Heather Kozar is looney for Clooney. (10) Sammy Sosa brings his own bat and ball when he visits the Mansion. (11) Puff Daddy and two hot mamas. (12) Jamie Foxx slithers on the dance floor with Lisa Dergan. (13) Liam Neeson and Geoffrey Rush. (14) Rod Stewart and Hef, forever young. (15) Party gods Ben Affleck and Stephen Dorff swap stories. (16) Former flames Scott Baio and Pamela Anderson Lee.

IN THEATERS | NEWS | FEATURES | HOME VIEWING GUIDE | SCREENING ROOM | SHOP



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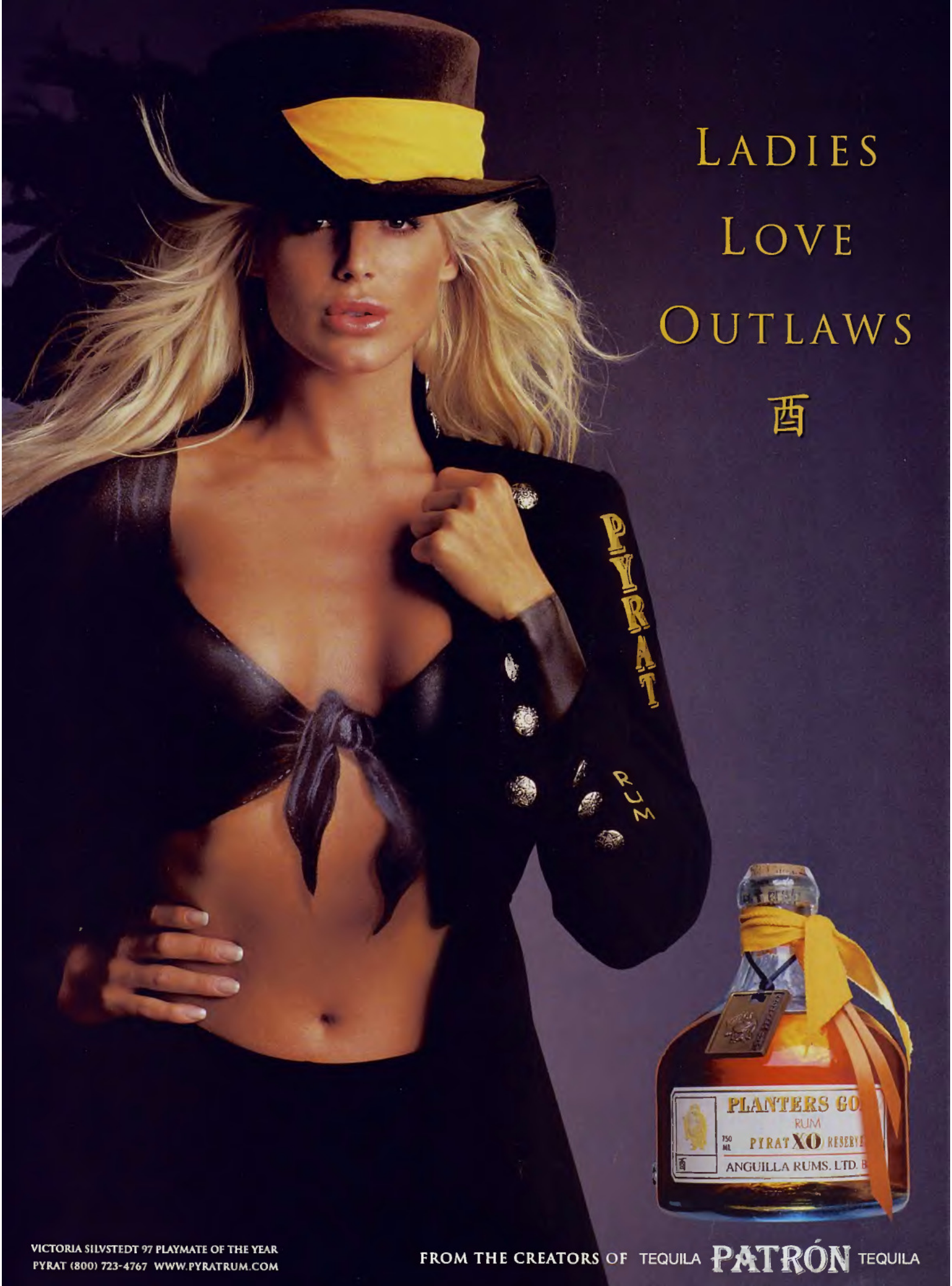

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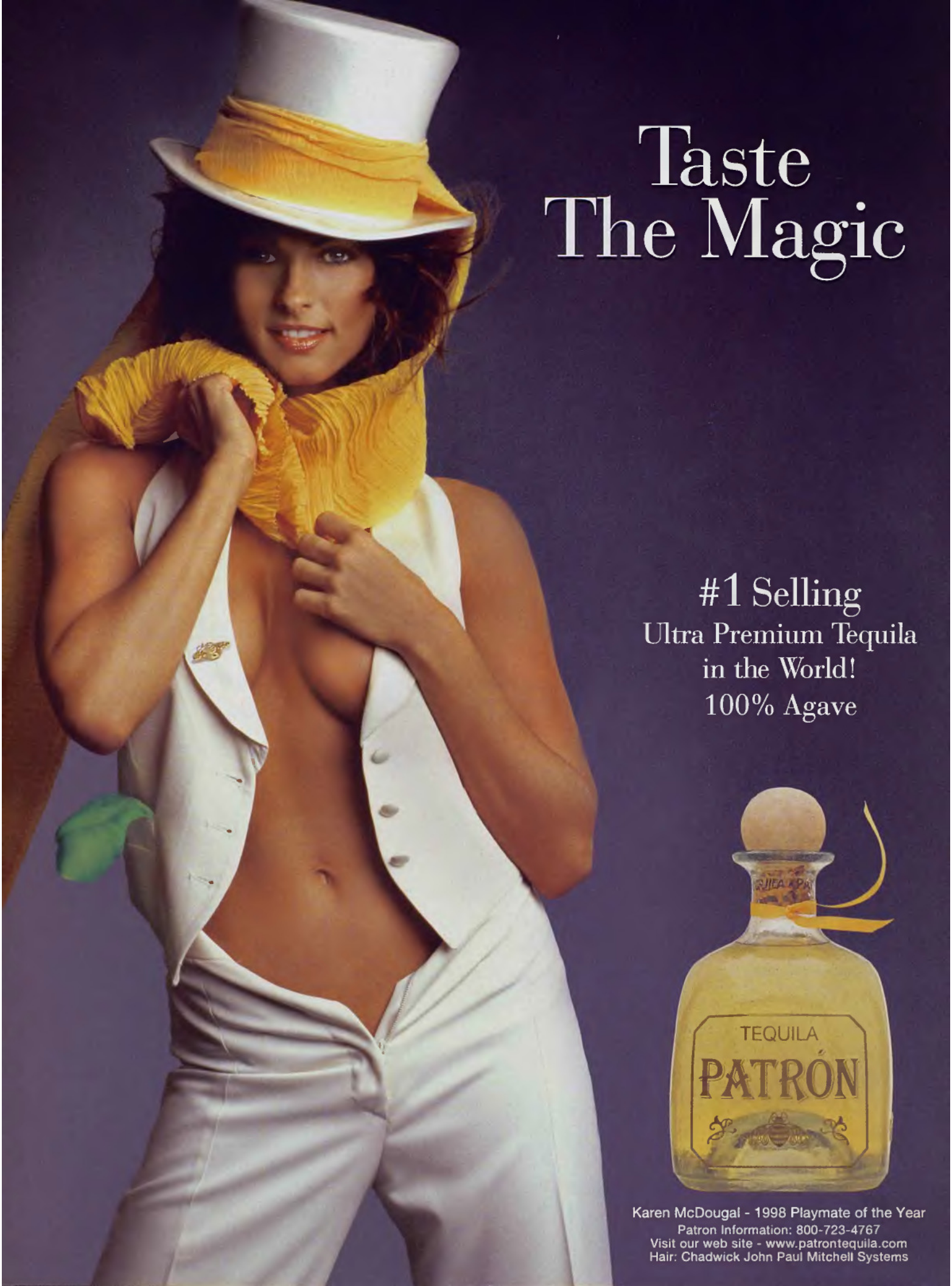
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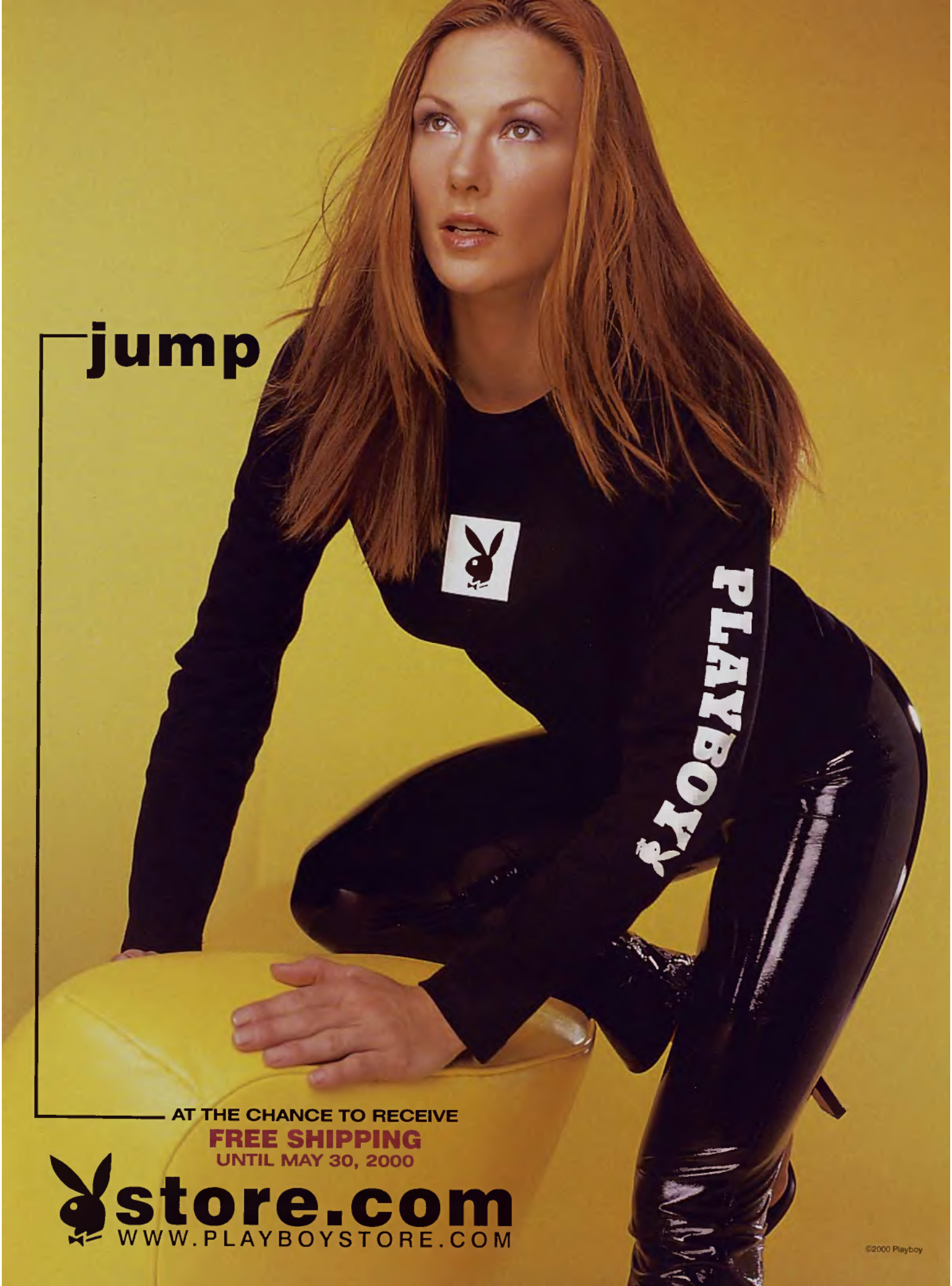
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MCCAIN AND ABLE

The Amy Silverman article *Don't Cross John McCain* (February) is narrow-minded. It isn't a revelation to learn that a senator who has served 17 years in office has made political enemies. If McCain had bestowed political and financial favors on his friends (as George W. has done abundantly during five years in office), he would no doubt be more popular. A few bruised egos is a worthwhile price to pay to get a serious reformer in the White House.

Alan Katz
New York, New York

Silverman quotes former *Arizona Republic* publisher Pat Murphy as saying, "McCain has a temper that is bombastic, volatile and purple-faced; sometimes he gets out of control. Do you want somebody in the White House with that kind of temper?" That's preferable, in my opinion, to someone who lies to Congress, grand juries and the American people about his behavior while his country trusts him to be commander in chief.

B.C. Milligan
Baltimore, Maryland

As a former Arizona state government employee, I was fortunate to work with Senator John McCain on a couple of legislative issues. I'm disappointed that Amy Silverman chose Grant Woods and Paul Johnson to represent the feelings of those who worked with the senator. Johnson, rumored to be seeking office higher than the mayor's position he held, has long been critical of all Republicans. Attorney General Woods was also being partisan. I only wish Silverman had been aware of their reputations before quoting them so extensively.

Mark Mazzie
Paoli, Pennsylvania

Silverman's dour picture of McCain seems stilted. There isn't much mention of the senator's stand on issues. Instead, she focuses on the way McCain gets along with other politicians. It doesn't matter whether newspeople or other politicians like him, because the decision of who will govern this country doesn't rest with them. It rests with the American voting population—for whom having an honest, albeit irritating, person in the White House is a requirement.

Mike Keller
Mesa, Arizona

STOKING THE FIRE

Count me in among gentlemen who prefer blondes, and Miss February, Suzanne Stokes (*Different Stokes*), among the blondes gentlemen prefer.

Edward Crean Jr.
Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey

I've definitely seen enough. My vote for Playmate of the Year is in: It's Miss February, Suzanne Stokes. PLAYBOY's photo editors have their work cut out for them trying to top this one in only ten remaining issues.

Rob Wood
Denham Springs, Louisiana

Suzanne Stokes? She certainly does. It's great knowing who the PMOY 2001 will be even before the PMOY 2000 is revealed.

T. Anthony Rowls
Los Angeles, California

I'd wrestle alligators any time to get to Suzanne Stokes.

Emmanuel Williams
St. Louis, Missouri

NO REGRETS

Congrats to Jeff Bezos (*Playboy Interview*, February) for putting into words an invaluable decision-making tool for life: regret minimalization. Anyone with big dreams or great ideas should analyze his or her direction with this method. I did—which is why I'm on my way to

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becoming a Marine Corps aviator rather than an engineer at a well-known aircraft manufacturer.

First Lieutenant C. Dutch Roell
USMC
Meridian, Mississippi

THE BRITISH ARE COMING, THE BRITISH ARE COMING

I am a soldier in training with the British Army. I had to write to tell you how much of a welcome distraction PLAYBOY has been for me during this difficult time.

Gordon Tait
Royal Corps of Signals
West Yorkshire, UK

GUTS AND GLORY

I'd like to compliment Asa Baber on his deeply moving *Men* column "Champion or Chicken?" (February). Reading it gave me the same feeling in the pit of my stomach that I felt when watching the final scene of *Saving Private Ryan*. I agree with Asa that most men examine their capacity for courage and cowardice all the time. That's why there will always be a place for films such as *Saving Private Ryan* and *Braveheart* and for columns such as "Champion or Chicken?"

Glenn Isaacson
Brooklyn, New York

Courage under dangerous circumstances is a misunderstood dimension of men's lives. We constantly wonder if our responses to danger measure up to unrealistic standards set by the media and our idealization of what is manly. Few writers have the courage to address this topic, and those who do usually hide it behind a critique of a movie character, a novelist or someone other than themselves. It takes guts to express in the first person that we fear, and that we dread being seen as cowards. Baber lets the world in on a dirty little secret about masculinity in his expression of a deep and real truth.

Gordon Bowen
Staunton, Virginia

PUZZLED

I bought the January issue of PLAYBOY to pass the time before a flight. I began the Naughty Little Word Search in the *Playboy Puzzle Challenge*, and took it on the plane to finish. As the flight progressed, I engaged the attractive young woman seated next to me in conversation and she asked what I was doing. I showed her the search and she offered to help me find the rest of the words. Looking over my shoulder, she pointed and exclaimed, "I found clitoris!" loud enough for several rows of passengers to hear. Needless to say, they stopped and listened.

Gus Ruckle
Santa Fe, New Mexico

A PASSION FOR TASCHEN

I enjoyed the Taschen pictorial (*The Erotic Spirit*, February), but I think PLAYBOY may have missed an opportunity to toot its own horn. I believe the cover girl for Helmut Newton's *Sumo* is Miss March 1980, Henriette Allais.

Harry Beams
Springfield, Illinois

Good eyes. According to Taschen, you're correct.

FOREVER IN YOUR HEART

I have never been as pleasantly surprised as when the February issue arrived with Angie Everhart on the cover. As a bikini-clad model in *Sports Illustrated* layouts she was always beautiful, but her nude PLAYBOY pictorial is a fantasy come true.

Tim Enloe
Hudson, Wisconsin

Angie Everhart is a redhead-lover's dream. Those long, sexy legs, that perfect body—but wait, is she a natural redhead? I guess we'll never know, since her hand is glued to that strategic spot.

Scott Schneider
Columbus, Ohio

Take a close look at page 134.

If Angie ever wants someone to count all of her freckles, I'm her man.

Jay Williams
Burlington, Vermont

Come on, guys. You take pictures of wannabe models and actresses and turn them into the most beautiful women ever photographed, and then you take goddesses like Angie Everhart, Farrah Fawcett, Katarina Witt and Elle Macpherson and run artsy-fartsy shots of them. Please get rid of the so-called art and give us more of the sexy stuff.

John Rielly
Galena, Ohio

It's no wonder Angie's gorgeous legs are insured for a million dollars. Based on that figure, the rest of her body is priceless.

Charles Heinlen
Okanogan, Washington

Bravo to Marco Glaviano for photographing Angie at her best. I've seen thousands of pictures in PLAYBOY over the years, but these are my favorites.

Tanya Paperd
Sterling Heights, Michigan

IT PAYS TO BE A WISEGUY

Not to be lost among Steven Van Zandt's (*20 Questions*, February) considerable and diverse talents is his impression (as Silvio Dante) of Michael Corleone, which was recently featured in this season's premiere of *The Sopranos*. Nothing compares to a wiseguy impersonating a wiseguy.

Gregory Trieste
Brick, New Jersey

LUCKY RABBIT

Each month I look forward to finding the Rabbit Head, but the February cover fooled me. I was certain the Rabbit was hiding in the beautiful Angie Everhart's cleavage. If you look closely, I think you will spot a forward-looking Rabbit. How lucky can you get?

Pete Wells
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Ashamed as I am to admit it, I had to go to the contents page for the clue on where to find the Rabbit. I challenged my friend to find it. He found two. Look closely at the joint of Angie's right index finger.

William Beck
Raleigh, North Carolina

STAY A-WEIL

February's *Grapevine* introduced us to Kymberlee Weil, former Hawaii University pitching star and now owner of an Internet company. I'd love to see more of her.

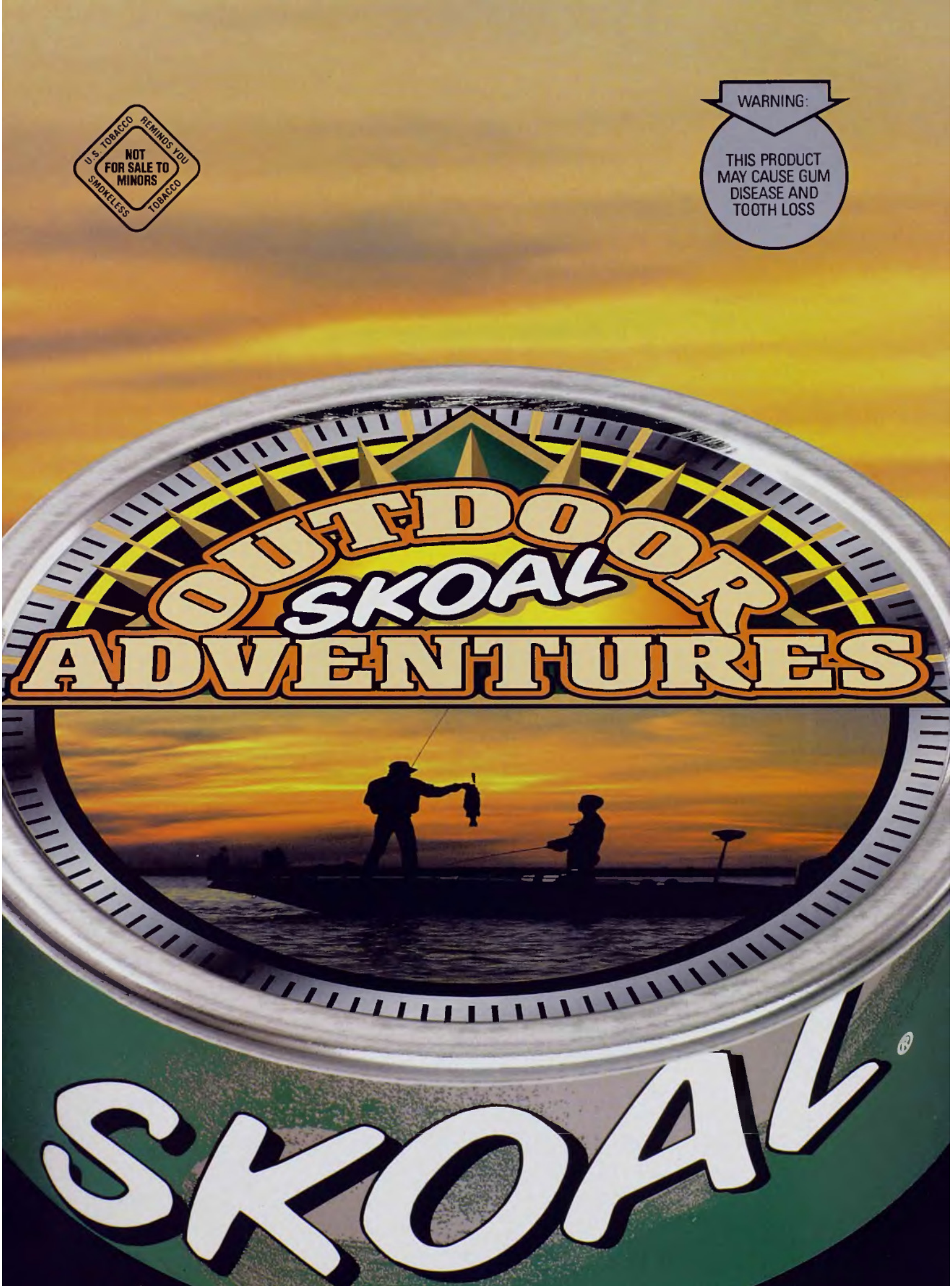
Christopher Moniz
New Bedford, Massachusetts

Kymberlee Weil knocked my socks off. If you have a heart and a sense of potential stardom, you'll feature another photo of her.

Frank Forster
Torrance, California

I've had the February issue for two days now, and I can't stop looking at Kymberlee Weil. I rushed to her site just to catch another glimpse of her but, alas, there was no photo. How about a pictorial?

Steven Hyde
Ellington, Connecticut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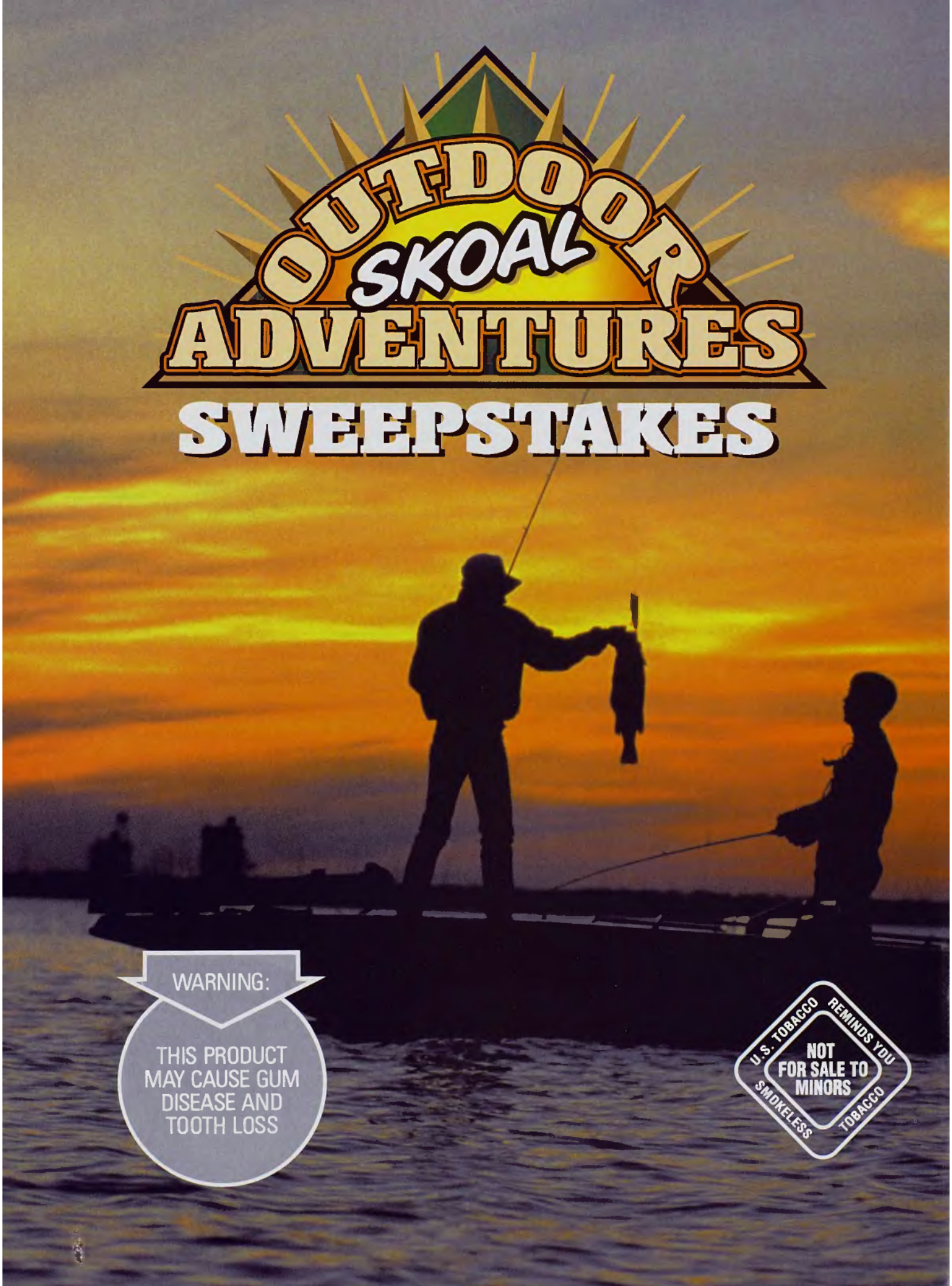
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PLAYBOY after hours

A GUY'S GUIDE TO WHAT'S HIP AND WHAT'S HAPPENING

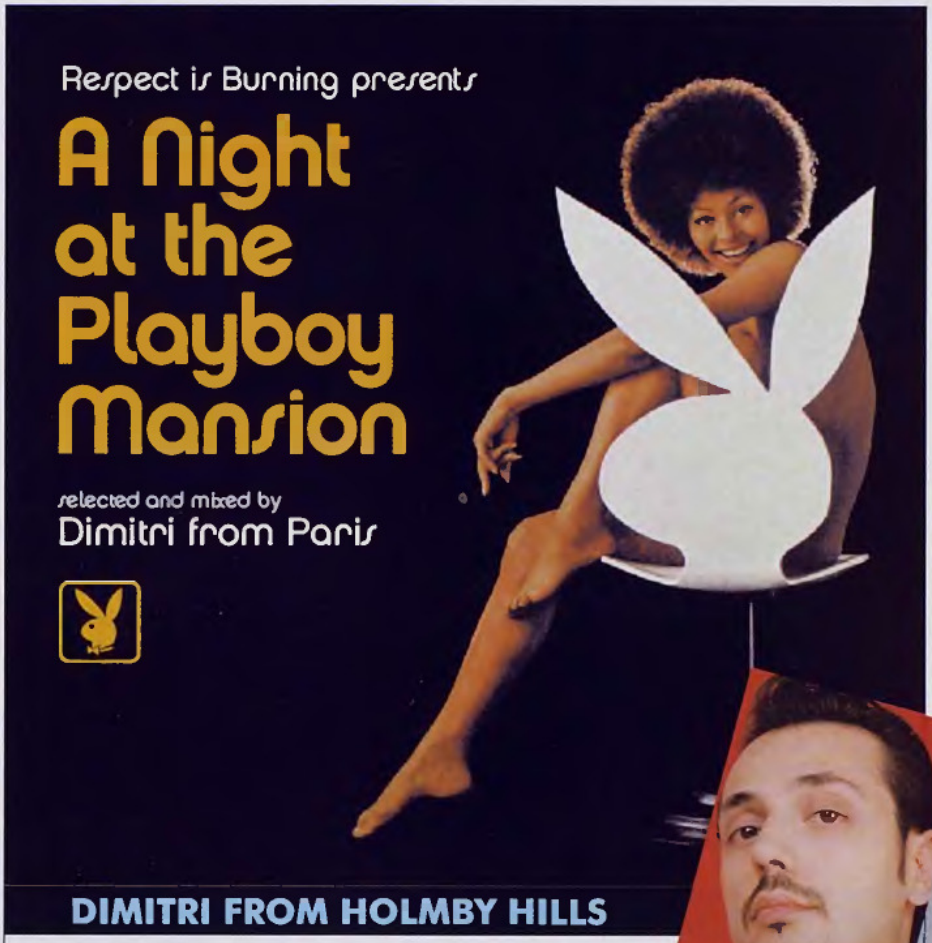
THE THRILL OF VICTORY, THE AGONY OF THE FEET FETISH

As soon as we heard that Los Angeles–based SMS Promotions plans to hold the first-ever Sexual Olympics at a Mexican resort in May, we grew excited by the possibilities—the pole vault, the baton relay or even the three-legged race. In the true spirit of the Greeks, the games are open only to amateurs. Forty porn stars will judge such events as Couples Marathon (endurance fucking) and Masturbation for Distance (what it sounds like). If the games are broadcast on cable or the Net we'll certainly be glued to our screens. We can't wait to see what the equestrian events involve.

THE DEVIL IN MISS DOW JONES

We say diversify, she says spread it around. Asia Carrera is the star of *Corporate Affairs* (the only skin flick to discuss the merits of Warren Buffett and Peter Lynch), which she wrote under the pseudonym Dow Jones. She is also a great investor who earns more money from her website than from her movies. We joked with Asia ("Is your fund no-load?") but she wos all business.

"According to my E-Trade Portfolio Manager stats page, my portfolio has risen 41 percent for the past 12 months. If I could maintain that return, I'd double my money in just over 24 months. It wouldn't surprise me at all to see the market tank and take most of my gains for the yeor with it. I had several sweet returns this year, particularly in two of Garrett Van Wagoner's funds. Van Wagoner Emerging Growth and Van Wagoner Micro-Cap returned 223 percent and 186 percent over the past year, respectively. I also gained 187.5 percent in Fidelity Select Electronics." Next month, Asia probes the Pacific Rim.



DIMITRI FROM HOLMBY HILLS

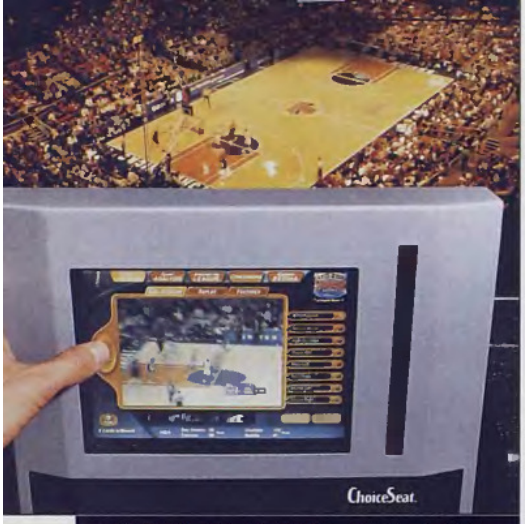
Premiere DJ Dimitri from Paris understands the tao of turntablism. "Sexy music lets your body do the talking, not your head," he says. Because Dimitri is a veteron of Paris' famous Respect nights, his CD *A Night at the Playboy Mansion* was inspired by the well-known porty palace. "The Mansion is like a cake—tangy on the inside, sweet on the outside. I tried to copture its cheerful, hedonistic vibe." This month he tests his recipe at release parties in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York.

SHOCK ABSORBER OF THE NEW

The new Inspiral condom is all about friction—it's designed with extra bulges on the sides. So how to judge the cultural significance of an expansive latex creation that resembles a coiled spring on the downstroke? We took the only steps possible—we held an interoffice contest, weighed the feedback and came up with four conclusions: (1) It's innovative. Best analogy of its action is the difference between flathead and Phillips screwdrivers. (2) It indicates that baggy hip-hop fashion has made its way into the condom market. (3) It's the first PC (Peyronie's disease consciousness) condom. (4) It's style with substance. A dissenting female editor says, "It's nice but would look better straight, with a slight break over the shoe, no cuff." And that's it from the latex desk of *After Hours*. Oops—we smell something burning. Gotta go.

PIGEON ENGLISH

Our chain e-mail of the month is How to Speak about Women and Be Politically Correct. You can imagine how it has



DOUBLE-TAKE DRIBBLE

The best seats have just gotten better. This season, Knicks fans at Madison Square Garden have the opportunity to watch every scowl and grimace of Latrell Sprewell and Patrick Ewing not once but twice. CSI Inc., a technology company that is backed by Intel, has installed touch-screen monitors on 557 seats at the world's most famous arena. Fans can choose to replay the action from eight different camera angles, or call up statistics on players. You can also order a beer—or three—without moving from your seat.

changed conversation in our Chicago office. Here are the rules: "She is not a babe; she is a breasted American. She is not easy; she is horizontally accessible. She has not been around; she is a previously enjoyed companion. She is not kinky; she is creative. She does not have a killer body; she is terminally attractive. She is not horny; she is sexually focused. She is not a two-bit whore; she is a low-cost provider. She does not go shopping; she is mall fluent."

THE TIP SHEET

Cell phone headsets: No, those freaks muttering into their lapels aren't crazy. They just look that way.

Tough helmet: A girl with a hot body but terrible face. Welcome to LA.

Bigorexia: A new mental disorder suffered by body builders who can't get big enough. We know the feeling.

Bar 89, NYC: Bathrooms at the Mercer Street restaurant have clear, full-length glass doors that cloud over when the stall is occupied.

Potato dildos: The creations of artist Pommela de Terre. She told *The Village Voice* that pommes—fresh, rubbed with lemon and olive oil for preservation—feel more sensual than other veggies or objects. Potato, lemon, olive oil—the new Greek salad.

High-altitude sex: Dirty little secret of mountaineers who like to get off in thin atmospheres.

Sekuhara: Japanese term for sexual harassment. A guide to avoiding feudal treatment of women is a new best-seller. Common red-card violations include "forcing women to serve drinks or making them sing karaoke duets."

SING KING

Stephen King's work has been anthologized, cinematized and televised, but *The Man in the Black Suit* could make him immortal. The short story is about to become the subject of an opera (American Opera Projects expects to premiere the work sometime in 2001). The tale deals with a man's second confrontation with the devil—he survived his first encounter when he was nine, but now he's 90 and infirm. The music is by Eve Beglarian, with a libretto co-written with Grethe Barrett Holby. Look for Kathy Bates to play the fat lady.

TWO FOR THE ROAD

The sap is running in Vermont and it's showing up on bumper stickers. Spotted on cars in Burlington were the lines "They Can Send Me to College But They Can't Make Me Think" and "I Play the Accordion—and I Vote."

HEAVENLY HOST

Jim Bumgardner didn't set out to play God, or even to run his website. It just turned out that way. In 1993, the Los Angeles multimedia engineer was working on a programming project named Arch-Angel and registered the domain name heaven.com as a mnemonic e-mail address. Now Bumgardner gets a river of e-mail addressed to God@heaven.com, theLord@heaven.com and soforth@heaven.com. Like anybody else's e-mail, most of God's is spam (and he'll get even for that), but there are also personal prayers, confessions and entreaties. And plenty of gripes. God gets "constantly blamed for everything that goes wrong and is not very often thanked," says Bumgardner. "The job is a burnout." Makes you wonder why Bill Gates wants it.

YES, STAIRMISTRESS

Sweat and Muscle: The Dominatrix Workout (S&M, get it?) is an exercise tape that will whip you into shape. As Mistress Desiree, dressed as a cop, says, "It's criminal not to have a great ass." She is joined on the 64-minute instructional video by Dick the Gimp and Mistress Jane, who lead you

DISH OF THE MONTH

Great chefs are able to create an entrée that anticipates exactly what you'd like to eat at a certain time. Mark Baker, executive chef of the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago, is such an artist. Pictured at right we see his pan-seared Ahi tuna with baby spinach, sweet and sour eggplant and—if that weren't enough—lobster pot stickers. He presents it all in o carrot sauce with chive and cilantro oil. That green leafy stuff on top is baby pea tendrils, which add a touch of herbal tartness. You can order this at the hotel's Seasons restaurant. When you go, be sure to say hi from us.

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RAW DATA

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QUOTE

"We're just like cockroaches. We will never go away."—GENE SIMMONS, RINGLEADER OF KISS

TONGUE STUN

The number of words the average person can speak in a minute: 225.

AUCTION EAR

Length in seconds of the average transaction on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange: 22.

RISING STOCK

In 1998, the number of fans who went to a Nascar event, the fastest-growing and largest spectator sport in the U.S.: 17.1 million.

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

Amount bestowed on the winner of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, the largest annual award in the world: $1.24 million. Amount given to winners of the Nobel Prizes in the sciences: $978,000.

ETERNAL FLAMES

According to a recent survey, percentage of women whose passionate feelings were rekindled when they saw a former boyfriend: 44. Percentage of men who felt a tingle in their pants when they encountered an old sweetheart: 62.

SPICE WORLD

Percentage of legislative seats in the federal government that are held by women in the U.S.: 13. Percentage of legislative seats occupied by women in Britain: 18. In Germany: 31. In Sweden: 43.

SUPERSIZE HIM

Number of healthy but short children in the U.S. who are treated each year with growth hormones for cosmetic reasons: 6000. The cost for this medically unnecessary treatment: $10,000 to $25,000.

NOAH WOODS

FACT OF THE MONTH

According to Broadband Digital Group, television advertisers collectively spend $350 per year on each TV viewer in the country.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE 15

In the first 12 months following the passage of Oregon's Death With Dignity Act (the first law of its kind in the U.S.), number of people who availed themselves of the prescription for a lethal dose of barbiturates: 15.

IT'S THE ECONOMY, STUPID

In a *Washington Post*–ABC News poll, percentage of Americans who approve of how their state's governor is doing his or her job: 73. Percentage who felt positively about their governors in 1991: 49.

GREENS FEES

Average weekly salary (not including prize money) of a PGA Tour caddie: $1250.

THAMES RIDE

Maximum number of adults who can ride the 450-foot London Eye Ferris Wheel on the Thames River: 800. Revenue from a fully loaded 30-minute ride: $9600.

WORLD BEATERS

According to the pro-democracy activist group Freedom House, the number of the world's 192 nations in which citizens enjoy "a broad range of political rights and civil liberties": 85.

YEN AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MANUFACTURE

In 1998, percentage of motorcycles purchased in the U.S. that were made by Harley-Davidson: 27. Percentage that were made by Japanese makers Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Suzuki: 68.

CELL DIVISION

Date of first call made on a handheld cellular phone: April 3, 1973.

—BETTY SCHAAL

through a strength-and-conditioning workout for couples. Jeffrey Overbay, a Columbia University junior and producer for Video Fashion, created the workout because he was sick of the Tae-Bo craze. "I thought it would be funny if I had a whole crew of women who could kick Billy Blanks' ass," he says. Overbay insists the workout is legitimate—he recruited friends who are aerobics instructors and personal trainers to pitch in. As for us, we'd rather watch than sweat, particularly when Nurse Delilah pushes a slave to the ground and yells, "The doctor will be pleased, but I am not." No pain, no gain.

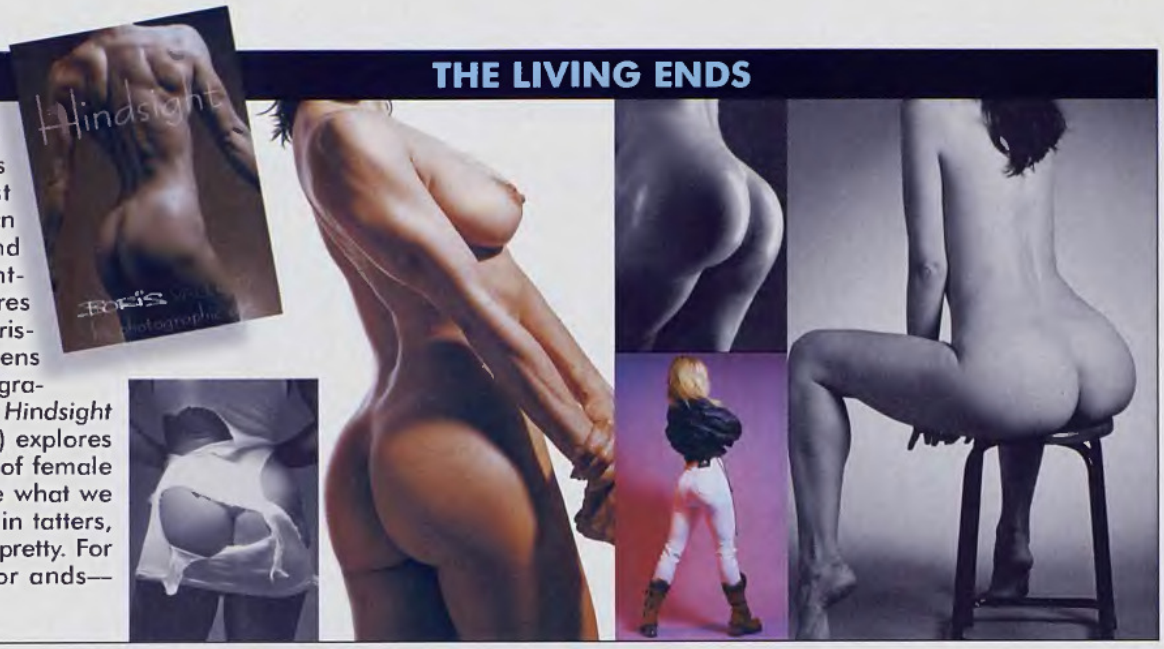
HAPPY MEAL?

An interesting offshoot of reproductive technology is the global sperm trade. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, a few sperm banks in Denmark are seeking to dominate the market. The reasons are simple: It makes economic sense for the industry to be consolidated somewhere; Danish sperm is coveted for its high biological quality; and it's cheap. (The general perception of Danes as blond and blue-eyed isn't necessarily true, but it can't hurt.) Ole Schou, who heads leading Danish sperm bank Cryos International, declared, "We think we can be the McDonald's of sperm." We'll take the fries, no shake, and definitely hold the pickle.

GOTCHA!

Security cameras are part of the modern landscape, so much so that we tend to forget they're around. In *Lovers Caught on Tape* and its sequel, *More Lovers Caught on Tape*, we see ordinary people going about their carnal business under the watchful eye of the surveillance camera. Most of the action is of the furtive variety, and some of it, given the time constraints, is downright inspired. Our only problem is the goofy tunes in the background. Real life doesn't need Muzak.

THE LIVING ENDS



You know Boris Vallejo's work: He's the fantasy artist who created Conan the Barbarian and other extravagantly muscled creatures from the retrofuturistic world. It happens he also is a photographer whose book *Hindsight* (Thunder's Mouth) explores the rich backside of female sensuality. We like what we see—whether it's in tatters, in tights or sitting pretty. For Boris, it's no ifs or ands—just butts.

THE FULL MARQUESS

When 11 women (ages range from 45 to 66) in a rural English district decided to pose nude for a calendar to raise money, they were hoping to collect $2000. At last count, they had raised $550,000. The bold ladies of the Women's Institute—a sisterhood known previously for "jam and Jerusalem"—have become a national phenomenon in Albion. The calendar is a tasteful send-up of garage-mechanic fare and has found fans in the highest places. When in London the women were invited to Buckingham Palace, where they turned over two calendars for the queen and queen mum.

TEED OFF

According to Agence France-Presse, a man wearing a University of Toronto T-shirt was nearly lynched by a mob in Nigeria. It turns out that Toronto has become the buzzword for all that is wrong in the country. A scandal exposed a series of blatant falsifications by a member of parliament, and his bald-faced lie about holding an MBA from the U of T (dare to dream!) made the town a symbol. Now Toronto is used to signify anything fake—such as a Toronto banker, a Toronto marriage, Toronto Gucci or, for that matter, Toronto Raptors.

BUZZ LIGHTFOOT

Next on *Will and Grace*: A gadget has been invented to fit a popular term—gaydar. Now available in Britain and Canada for about $40, Gaydar is a high-tech key chain that beeps when another such device comes within its 20-foot range. It's up to the user to figure out the rest. Fortunately, technophobes can still use the spot-the-burly-mustached-guy-in-the-leather-vest method.

E-MAIL WITH ATTITUDE

Yahoo, Mindspring, Excite. Fed up with the mindlessly chipper domain names of the major e-mail providers? For those who want to express their inner jerk, a company called Datapimp offers a host of rude and offensive e-mail addresses that are true to the sentiments of most web surfers. Datapimp can outfit you with a straightforward tag (joe@fuckoff.com) or something directed at an ex (joe@meet-me-in-hell.com). There's also the self-aggrandizing (joe@pimpmotherfucker.com) and our favorite (joe@sorry-ifuckedyourwife.com). Point your browser to datapimp.com for details. Now, fool!

THE DILBERT PRINCIPLE

A Cornell University study has shown that incompetent people tend to be blissfully ignorant of their incompetence. In fact, the research revealed that these people tend to have more confidence in their competence than people who know what they're doing. The report by Professor David Dunning in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* came to the brilliant conclusion that incompetent people lack the cognitive skills to recognize incompetence—or the competence of others. Just our luck.

BABE OF THE MONTH

In the annals of country-music crossovers, few have maintained the irresistible appeal of Faith Hill. The 32-year-old honey-blonde sensation has sold more than 10 million albums since 1993, breaking sales records and garnering countless awards. Hill hails from Star, Mississippi, and kicked off this year's Super Bowl by singing the national anthem. Her fondest wish is that everyone be able to read, so the beauty established the Faith Hill Family Literacy Project to raise awareness, if not the quality of country-and-western lyrics. Faith is a family girl; her dad inspired her literacy project and her husband is her former touring partner, Tim McGraw. We're big fans, and we hope we'll have more Faith in the future.

music

POP

SO FAR, early 21st century black pop sounds a lot like the last century's—hip-hop-influenced beats, salty lyrics, a lack of subtlety and stacked keyboards augmented by the occasional electric guitar. That is the basic formula, as Kelis illustrates on her debut, ***Kaleidoscope*** (Virgin). Kelis has an intriguing voice: girlish and husky. She's not afraid to take vocal risks, as her performance on the hit *Caught Out There* proves. She can be as slick as most contemporary R&B (*Mafia*, *Roller Rink*), but there's an appealingly unfinished, rough quality to her singing. Next time, Kelis and her production team should try rocking out a bit, which would serve her voice well.

The Platters were an important transitional group in the Fifties. They had the satin harmonic style of the Ink Spots and a youthful doo-wop energy. They made stylized, ultraromantic pop records that sold well outside the then narrow "race" market. Some of the tunes were Tin Pan Alley standards (*Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*), though most were smooth originals (*The Great Pretender*, *Twilight Time*, *You've Got the Magic Touch*) that were great for slow-dancing. Tony Williams' tenor voice was deeper than that of Johnny Mathis but similar in sentimental effect. ***The Best of the Platters*** (Mercury) captures a group that is a link between World War II crooners and contemporary groups like Boyz II Men. —NELSON GEORGE

ROCK

For record execs, alternative rock is barely a memory. Indie labels still serve as farm teams occasionally—Blink 182 cut its teeth on one—but nobody thinks they're the first step to stardom anymore. Yet the flow of releases continues unstanched. The Drive-By Truckers' ***Pizza Deliverance*** (Soul Dump) designs country music for lowlifes. Its raucous rock feel is uncompromised by the odd mandolin or banjo. The album is replete with tales of drunken indiscretion and murderous rage, of smarmy swingers and a guy who hooks up with a woman whose television he steals. Modest Mouse's ***Building Nothing Out of Something*** (Up, Box 21328, Seattle, WA 98111) mines that other woe-begotten genre: the indie 45 compilation. This Northwest trio has such a consistent sonic signature that disparate songs hang together as if fitted with dovetail joints. Anyone who is an admirer of Pavement's fetching tunes, dissonant guitar and stop-and-go structures should give this collection a try. And guess what? Modest Mouse has a "real" album on Epic that is due out any day now. —ROBERT CHRISTGAU

ALAN WITSCHONKE

Kelis spins a *Kaleidoscope*.

Under-the-radar alt rock, lots of folk, blues and jazz, and some Axl Rose.

Guns n' Roses went from hard-rock superstars to bloated arena rockers in record time. Egos and drug excesses sealed their fate, and they fell apart in the mid-Nineties. But their spectacular double-concert CD, ***Live Era '87–'93*** (Geffen), proves they were easily the most intense hard-rock act of their time. These searing, high-energy versions of their hits, from *Welcome to the Jungle* to *November Rain*, are far superior to the studio originals, combining the kick of AC/DC, the swagger of the Stones and the over-the-top roar of early punk. Singer Axl Rose still operates under the band's moniker. After six years, he has surfaced with a new track, *Oh My God*, on the soundtrack to ***End of Days*** (Geffen). Unfortunately, unlike *Live Era*, it's a subpar Nine Inch Nails–style yowlfest.

—VIC GARBARINI

R&B

Super Chikan, a.k.a James Louis Johnson, plays a startlingly original style of R&B. Like his Fat Possum labelmates from Mississippi, Super Chikan is still hot-wired to the spark that ignited the blues half a century ago. He uses that power to scramble the DNA of what we think of as R&B on ***What You See*** (Fat Possum). Nerdy white genre-blenders like Beck and Fatboy Slim would give their left nuts to be able to pull off Mr. Chikan's brilliantly wacky but heartfelt synthesis of musical styles. —VIC GARBARINI

FOLK

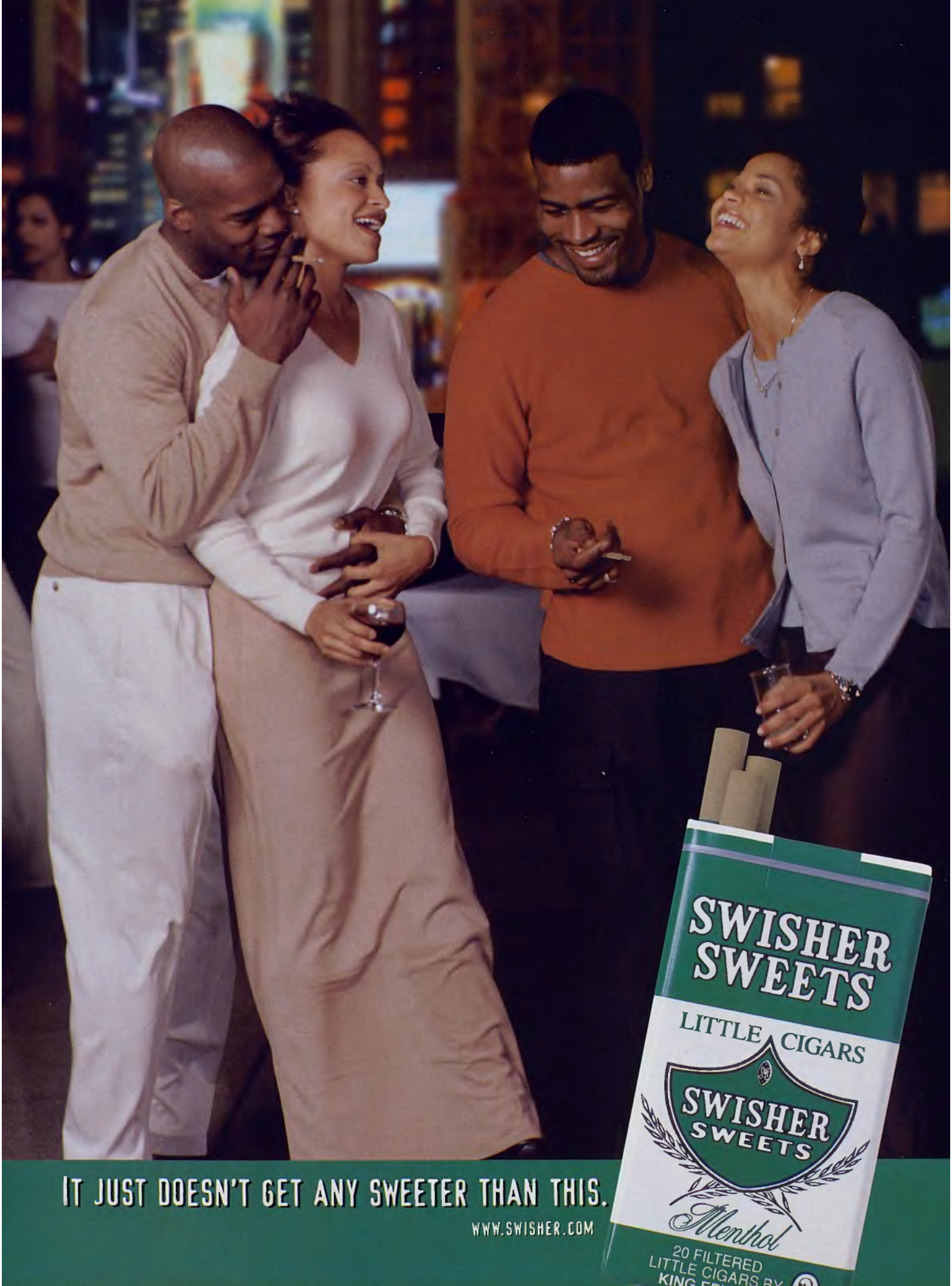
You can take an old song and make it better. Or you can take an old song and sing it pretty much the way it's always been sung. Van Morrison, Lonnie Donegan and Chris Barber take the latter approach on ***The Skiffle Sessions: Live in Belfast 1998*** (Virgin), and it's hard to think of another CD in recent years with more energy. You want to sing along. You want to pound the table. You want to pick up a guitar and strum the three chords these ancient songs are built on. If this is called nostalgia, then give me more. Skiffle was the English term for a hybrid of American folk, Dixieland and rockabilly in the mid-Fifties, and most of the great British Invasion bands came out of it. Donegan, skiffle's foremost practitioner, had many hit records whose main appeal was enthusiasm and affection for songs that were ancient even then. The guy hasn't lost a step, and Van Morrison sounds reborn in these rough-hewn versions of *It Takes a Worried Man*, *Railroad Bill*, *Muleskinner's Blues* and a dozen more gems that needed only a light dusting to shine again. —CHARLES M. YOUNG

Loose in the World (Fair Star Music) is the first record Judy Henske has made in more than 30 years. The good news is that not a thing has changed. She's still the witty, dramatic, blues-belting folksinger she always was. You can often summarize a legend in simpler terms, but not this one. After all, this album opens with *Mad Dog Killer*, with an updated New Orleans funeral arrangement and a lyric that sends up the bad-man ballad. It closes with a showy version of the standard *Until the Real Thing Comes Along* that passes through traditional jazz. The bulk of the album is originals, and the best of them are *Dark Angel* (a rewrite of *Motherless Child*) and *Dropped Like a Dime*, whose cowboy surrealism combines blues convention with hints of personal confession. This is an exploration of a kind of American art song. Henske's vision, which is both caustic and compassionate, is summed up in a line from one of her whiskey-blues tunes, *Blue Fortune*: "Love is just like smoke/You know you can't see it clearly till it disappears." That's the kind of thing that once made people call her queen of the beatniks. May she make a record a year for the next 30. (judy henske.com or P.O. Box 326 Plaza Station, Pasadena, CA 91102.)

—DAVE MARSH

BLUES

Minnesota blues legends Dave Ray and Tony Glover have formed an alli-



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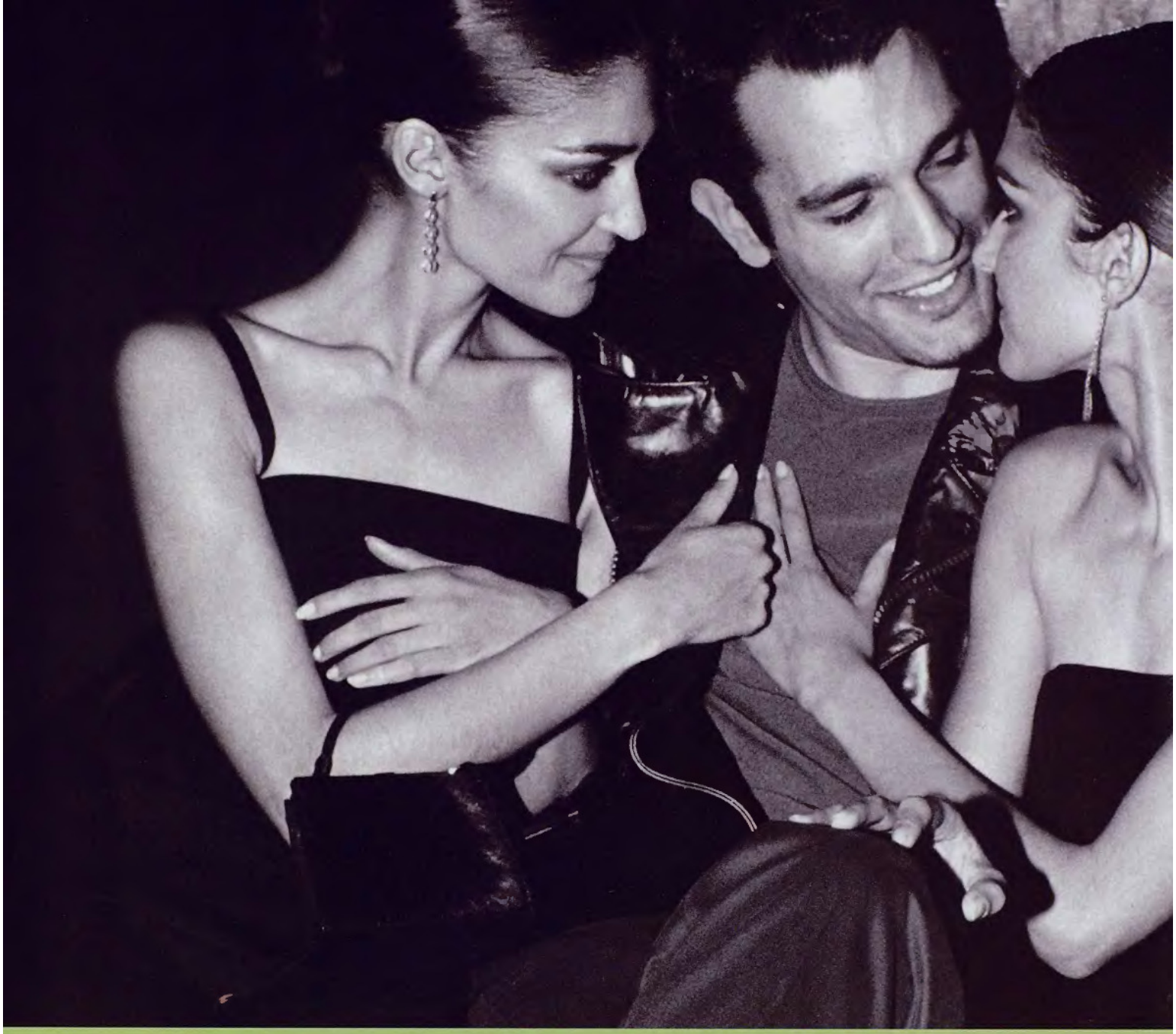

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fast tracks

NECK BONES DEPARTMENT: **Rick James** had the first documented case of rock-and-roll neck, and now the *British Medical Journal* has found that playing sax can be a health hazard. A technique called circular breathing that enables sax players to do extended solos could be the culprit. Not enough air gets to the brain. We knew that.

REELING AND ROCKING: NBC-TV will air a special on Arista Records' 25th anniversary, *25 Years of Number-One Hits*. It will include historic film clips and performances. . . . **Deborah Gibson** shot a pilot for a TV series, *Maggie Bloom*, produced by **Norman Lear**. . . . **Jon Bon Jovi** will star in *Pay It Forward* with **Kevin Spacey** and **Helen Hunt**.

NEWSBREAKS: **Pete Townshend's** play, *Lifehouse*, opened in London. . . . **Roger Walters** will tour the U.S in June and July. . . . **Green Day** is writing material for a new album due out in October. . . . **Tom Waits** and his wife, **Kathleen Brennan**, are collaborating with **Robert Wilson** on the opera *Wozzeck*. Waits hopes to find time for another album this year. . . . Songwriter **Diane** (*Unbreak My Heart*) **Warren** is working on a concept album with **Patti LaBelle**. The title track, *When a Woman Loves*, features an all-star group of female vocalists and will be included on the album along with Patti's version of the song. **Jimmy Jam** and **Terry Lewis** are producing seven of the songs, and a TV special could follow the album's release. . . . **Eve 6's** sophomore CD will be out this month, and they plan to once again open shows instead of headlining them. . . . Plans have been announced to build the Stax Museum of American Soul Music at the original site of Stax Records in Memphis. . . . When **Diana Ross** hosts the NAACP Image Awards, **Smokey Robinson** will be inducted into the Hall of Fame. . . . The Swedish Academy of Music has just awarded **Bob Dylan** the Polar Music Prize and $120,000, which will be presented to him by the king of Sweden. . . . **Missy Elliott** was in Milan at the spring fashion shows with **Donatella Versace**, shooting photos that appeared on the Internet. Taking a break from producing others' albums, she'll have a new one out in 2000. . . . The third Further Festival, this summer, will be headlined by **Bob Weir** and **Mickey Hart**. . . . Actor **Jeff Bridges** has formed a new label with **Michael McDonald**. Both Bridges and McDonald will release CDs on Ramp Records. . . . **Don Henley**, whose first solo album in ten years came out in March, is touring. He hasn't closed the door on an **Eagles** album. . . . Golden State Warrior **Terry Cummings** will have an album out this summer. Look for him in **Spike Lee's** *Love and Basketball*. . . . **Richard Ashcroft**, former leader of the **Verve**, makes his solo debut on CD and tours this year. . . . The **Dave Matthews Band** worked on their next album in their hometown of Charlottesville, Virginia. They plan to finish in time to do a summer tour, but don't expect to see the CD before the fall. . . . We caught the new Chicago Shakespeare Theater's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Irishman **Joe Dowling**. *Dream* has a jazz, blues and rock score. Until you hear the Bard declaimed in doo-wop, you haven't heard anything. . . . We hear that when the **Smashing Pumpkins'** manager resigned, this note was released to the press: "It was with great pride and enthusiasm that I took on the management of the Pumpkins back in October. Unfortunately, I must resign due to medical reasons. **Billy Corgan** is making me sick."

—BARBARA NELLIS

ROCK METER

	Christgau	Garbarini	George	Marsh	Young
Drive-By Truckers *Pizza Deliverance*	8	8	9	7	9
Judy Henske *Loose in the World*	6	6	7	9	8
Kelis *Kaleidoscope*	8	7	8	7	8
Super Chikan *What You See*	5	9	9	7	9
Morrison, Donegan, Barber *The Skiffle Sessions*	7	6	6	8	9

ance with Reggie Scanlan and Camile Baudoin of the Radiators. Now they're calling themselves the Back Porch Rockers. The foursome's album, ***By the Water*** (Back Porch Rockers), approaches acoustic blues with low-down, sensual and melodic tunes. Although they play without any drums, the natural percussive aspect of the guitars and the bass makes the music undulate, while Ray's warm warble of experience offers solace for whatever crisis you happen to be facing. Especially recommended: *Everybody's Going for the Money*. —CHARLES M. YOUNG

Robert Bradley is an Alabama-born street singer from Detroit who hooked up with a rock trio and, as Robert Bradley's Blackwater Surprise, produced a fine album in 1996. The group's second album, ***Time to Discover*** (RCA), is one of the best modern blues records in years. It's the blues as defined at its outer limits, reminiscent of pop-funk in its Seventies heyday. Its melange of accents and attitudes offers slices of Howlin' Wolf and hip-hop—the latter abetted by the appearance of Kid Rock on *Higher* and *Tramp II*. There's nothing artificial about it, either. —DAVE MARSH

JAZZ

No matter where you look, you won't be able to find a busier sideman than trumpeter Steve Bernstein: His hundreds of credits range from mix master Tricky to Mel Tormé. So it makes sense that Bernstein's own band, Sex Mob, would keep more balls in the air than the Flying Karamazov Brothers. On ***Solid Sender*** (Knitting Factory), he uses his slide trumpet—which looks like a Mini-Me trombone and hasn't been seen much since the early Twenties—to turn the Stones' *Ruby Tuesday* into a flippy funeral procession. Then he sends the Duke Ellington classic *The Mooche* into the sleaziest part of town and milks the blues from Buffalo Springfield's folkie icon *For What It's Worth*. There's lots of irony and anarchy (credit the gut-piercing wails of altoist Briggan Krauss), but even more than enough pure funk to keep everything extremely well oiled. More wails, less irony and some of the most inventive writing in modern jazz have made the Chicago–based band Eight Bold Souls into not-just-local heroes. Led by saxophonist and composer Edward Wilkerson, they revel in a mix of horns, strings (cello and bass) and tuba. ***Last Option*** (Thrill Jockey) is their first disc since 1994. It features seven of their exuberant panoramas, each of which demands—and rewards—more than one listening. —NEIL TESSER

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TOUCH AND GO

Imagine picking up your cell phone and having it automatically dial your voice mail. Or gripping your car's steering wheel and sitting back while the seats, windows and radio adjust to your personal preferences. Well, thanks to developments in fingerprint identification technology (known as biometric identification), your thumb can do a lot more for you than hitch a ride. Through an exclusive partnership with Philips Flat Panel Display Systems, California-based Who Vision is adding touch identification to a range of home electronics. Slated for release later this year are television sets and telephones that let you surf, shop and bank online with fingerprint approval. In addition, several manufacturers have teamed up with Who Vision and its competitor Digital Persona to develop devices that will enable you to use your pointers instead of plastic to get into gyms, register at hotels, buy groceries and withdraw cash from an ATM. And by early next year, industry insiders predict that a wide range of consumer products, from garage door openers to computer keyboards, will incorporate the technology. Obviously, security is the draw here. You're the only one with your particular prints, so transactions will be hacker-proof. On the other hand, it's less painful to replace a stolen ATM card.

CATHY HULL

—JOEL ENOS

ROLL WITH THE CHANGES

We were blown away by IBM's Personal Area Network, a gadget that lets two people trade contact information with a handshake. But that's nothing compared with Big Blue's latest project—a computer that you can roll up like a newspaper. The "bendable computer" is one of several items that could result from what IBM refers to as "hybrid organic/inorganic transistors." According to Cherie Kagan, a scientist at IBM's T.J. Watson Research Center in New York, this new class of semiconducting materials can be manufactured at low temperatures, making it possible to build displays on materials such as plastic or glass, which would otherwise melt. No news on when these flexible transistors will be ready for your commute, but other applications include screens that could be built into common household appliances (such as refrigerators and washing machines) and electronic newspapers. "One day soon, you'll be able to download information—complete with text, animation and video—to a portable and reusable electronic paper, and then roll it up, stash it in your back pocket and go," says Kagan. Just don't use it to swat flies.

—MARC SALTZMAN

WILD THING

You don't have enough room for a billiard table in your bachelor pad? Just connect Interact's Pool Shark to your computer. This $30 USB peripheral has a groove that guides your pool cue (or a supplied plastic one) across a roller, which registers the force of your stroke. It makes the best pool sims—including Ultimate 8 Ball (packaged with the controller), Virtual Pool II and Expert Pool—seem hyperreal.

—JASON BUHRMESTER

DISHING ON RADIO

First it was television that beamed down from outer space to your home. Now 100 radio channels will be delivered via satellite to your car, truck or boat. Yes, it will cost you—about $10 per month. But the two main players, XM Satellite Radio and Sirius Satellite Radio, both let you tailor the service to suit your tastes. Love the Foo Fighters but hate Jay-Z? Sirius, the more tunes-oriented of the two, is offering eight genre-based rock channels, a slew of jazz, classical and R&B formats as well as rock channels by decade—all commercial free and accessible nationwide. If you're a news junkie, XM has inked deals to beam radio versions of *USA Today*, *The Sporting News*, Nascar, C-SPAN and CNN. Look for satellite-equipped mobile audio gear from Pioneer, Alpine, Sony and Panasonic, priced slightly higher than old-fashioned broadcast tuners.

—RICH WARREN

format wars: video recorders

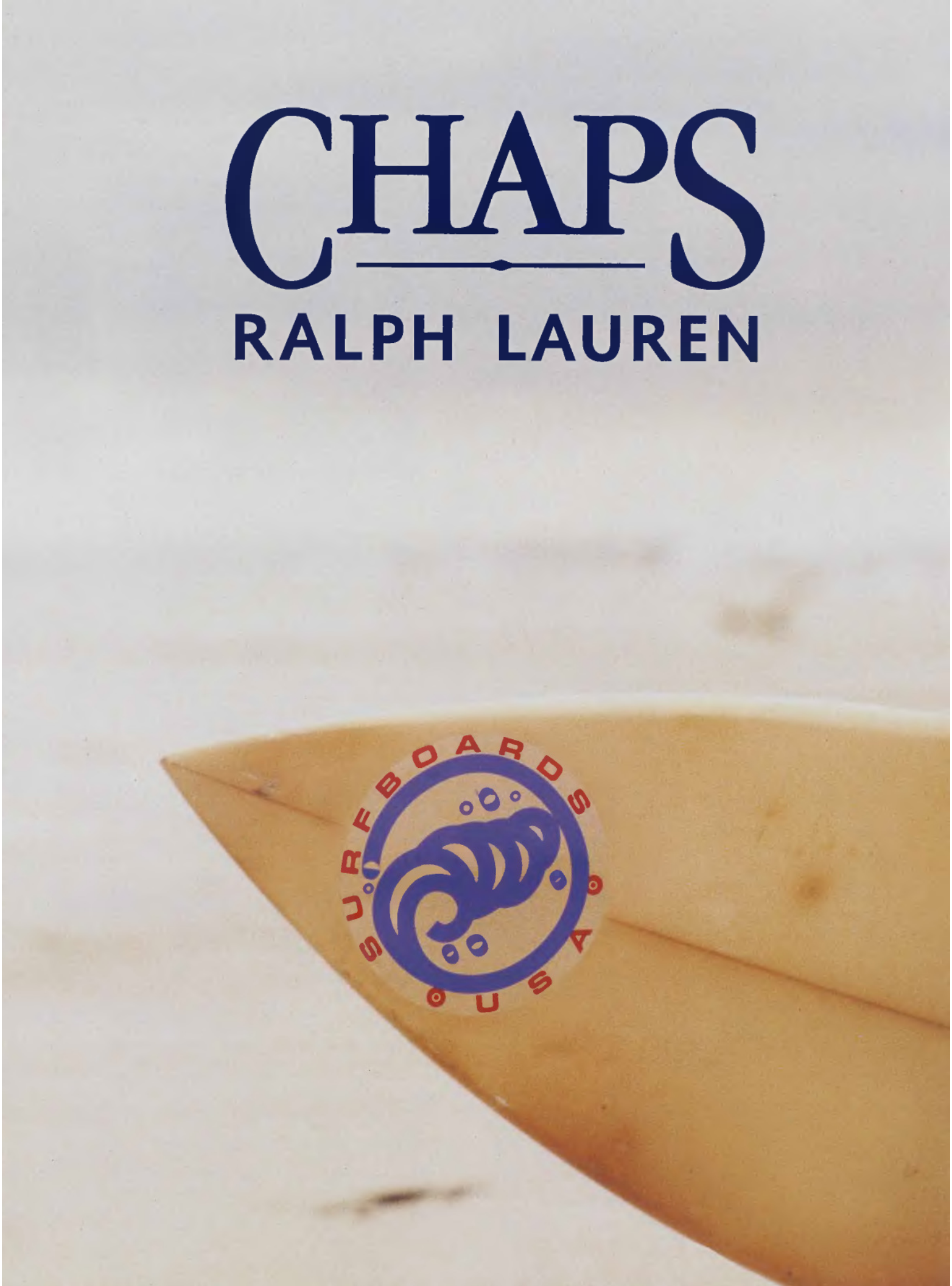
By the end of the year, you'll be able to record TV signals digitally. How that's done is still up for grabs. Several digital video formats including tape and recordable forms of DVD are vying for the VCR's spot in your entertainment system. Here's the lowdown. Absorb and choose carefully.

FORMAT	SCOOP
D-VHS	*Priced at $1000, Data-VHS machines record analog and high-definition TV signals onto 2½-hour tapes priced at about $15 each. Panasonic and JVC have introduced D-VHS hardware. Problem: Some early machines must be connected to like-branded HD tuners in order to record and play back digitally.*
DVD-RAM	*Backed by Panasonic, Samsung, Hitachi and Toshiba, 4.7-gig DVD-RAM discs store two to four hours of video (depending on resolution). Hardware is expected to start at $2000; discs will cost about $35 each. Problem: DVD-RAM is incompatible with existing DVD players and can't record at HD quality.*
DVD-RW	*Pioneer, JVC, Zenith, Ricoh, Sharp and Mitsubishi are backing this format. Each side of a DVD-RW has 4.7 gigs of storage, enough to hold between one and six hours of video. Pioneer claims the DVD-RW discs will play in "most" current DVD spinners. Problem: The machines don't record digital television.*
DVD+RW	*Discs made with Philips' recordable DVD variation are the only ones we've actually seen play back on current DVD hardware. The single-sided discs store up to four hours of near-DVD-quality video. Additional support from Thomson gives DVD+RW a boost. Problem: The machines don't record at high-definition quality.*

WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 166.

CHAPS

RALPH LAUREN



movies

By LEONARD MALTIN

DOES THE WORLD need another cute Irish comedy? Why not? ***The Closer You Get*** (Fox Searchlight) is a likable, flyweight comedy about a tiny, remote island village where there's so little to do that the entire population turns out for the priest's weekly film club (recent selections have included *The Song of Bernadette*, *Saint Joan* and *Keys of the Kingdom*). The young men who gather daily at the town's only pub finally decide to do something about the lack of eligible, attractive females in their community: They take out a ridiculous want ad in *The Miami Herald*, hoping to attract sexy, athletic American women "with marriage in mind." Ian Hart plays the randiest member of the group, who denies his attraction to the feisty young woman he works with every day at his butcher shop. A likable cast makes the most of William Ivory's script, which might have played even better as a one-hour television movie. ¥¥½

•

Billy Crudup and Jennifer Connelly give passionate performances in Keith Gordon's ***Waking the Dead*** (USA), an emotionally charged adaptation of the Scott Spencer novel. Skipping in time from the early Seventies to the following decade, the movie charts the course of a working-class man who has been groomed for greatness since birth, when his blue-collar parents named him Fielding. He wants to run for public office, preferably the presidency, because he genuinely believes he can do good. Then

Crudup and Connelly: Wide awake.

A haunting romance,
a haunted family,
an American psycho.

he chances to meet Sarah, a radical-thinking woman who becomes his lover, confidante and conscience (or, as she puts it, his Jiminy Cricket). While devoted to each other, they are at cross-purposes ideologically, and Fielding finds himself haunted by her as he stands on the verge of a political career. Encompassing the changing political climate of the Seventies and Eighties, as well as changes in personal priorities, *Waking the Dead* serves as a kind of emotional touchstone for any viewer who lived through that period. Crudup adds to his already-impressive résumé of strong performances, while Connelly shows a depth and range no other role has afforded her. The film has some uneven passages, but there are moments of heartbreaking truth about relationships that are as good as any I've seen on film. ¥¥¥

•

Jane Campion is executive producer of the Australian import ***Soft Fruit*** (Fox Searchlight), and to most Americans, hers will likely be the only familiar name on either side of the camera. Writer-director Christina Andreef spins a tale of four grown children—three sisters and a brother who's just been sprung from prison—who return home to be with their mother, who is dying of liver cancer. Their father, a lusty Greek immigrant, proudly tends his garden, shoots birds from the trees because they make too much noise and refuses to let his son into the house. Their mother is fairly sanguine about her fate, while her daughters have a hard time dealing with her and one another. With its good performances and keen sense of humor, *Soft Fruit* is moderately entertaining but seems underdeveloped—or, forgive me, not quite ripe. ¥¥

•

The Virgin Suicides (Paramount Classics) is a near miss. Based on Jeffrey Eugenides' well-regarded novel of Seventies

A LONG-OVERDUE DEBUT

The range of films not yet available on video is surprisingly broad, from Luis Buñuel's *Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* to the 1980 Tony Danza–Michelle Pfeiffer film *Hollywood Knights*.

Some films aren't available because of snags involving film rights; this list includes the oft-requested John Wayne picture *The High and the Mighty*, Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess* and the MGM musical *Annie Get Your Gun*.

Others from the late Seventies and early Eighties are mired in a no-man's-land of music rights. Producers who didn't foresee the importance of home video and failed to acquire those clearances at the time they negotiated their deals have since been unable (or unwilling) to pay the asking prices. Their films can be shown on cable TV but won't make it to VHS or DVD until someone coughs up a lot of money.

Several years ago, the release of the Buster Keaton silent-film library on video (more recently reissued in even better-looking copies on DVD) was greeted as a genuine video event. For once, the boast wasn't idle hype.

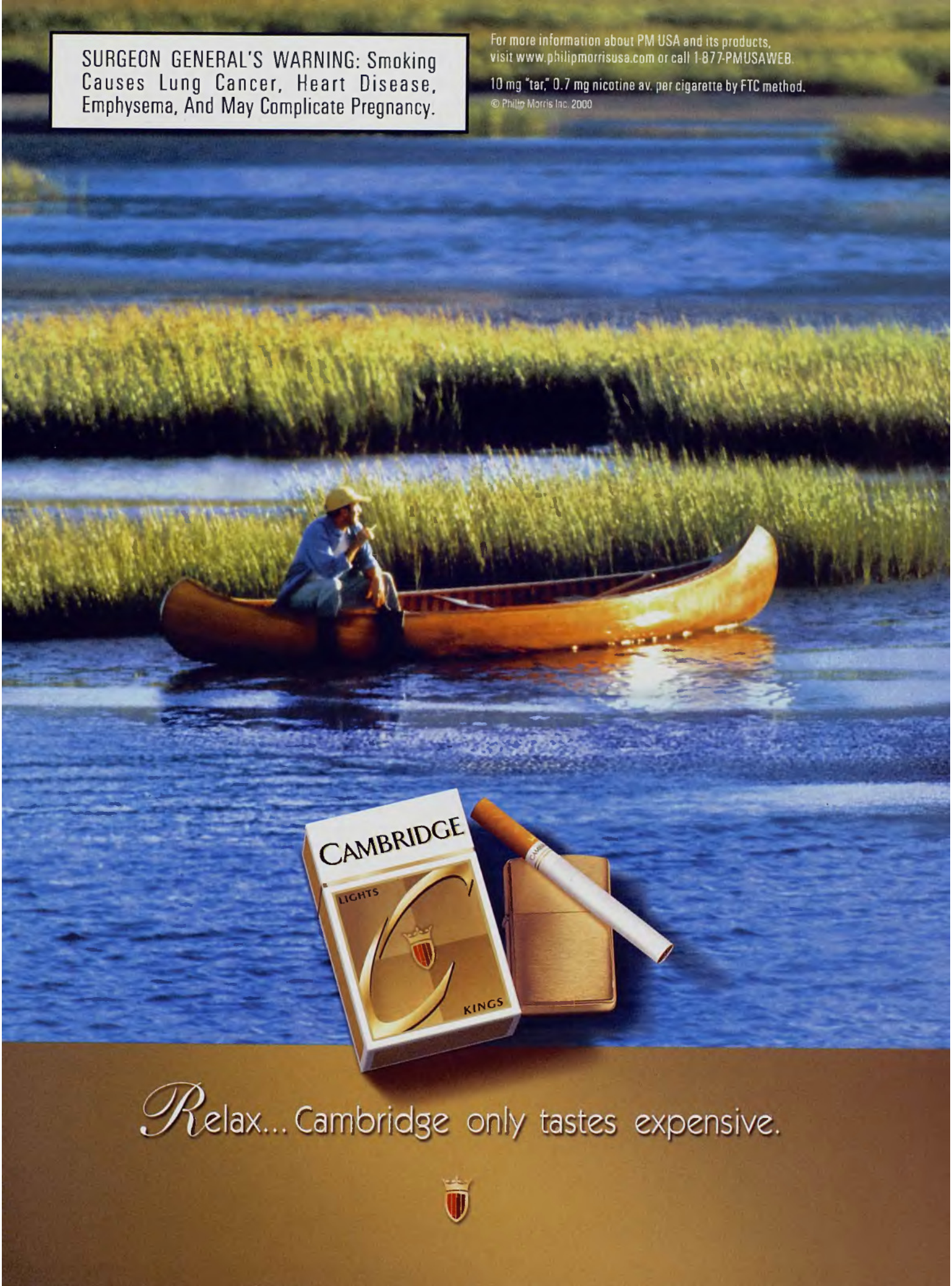
Another such event is upon us: the video debut of Krzysztof Kieslowski's amazing ten-part series *The Decalogue*.

The significance of this release is magnified by the fact that—again, for reasons involving rights—the hour-long films were never even given a proper theatrical or television showcase in the U.S. Until now the films have been seen only in a handful of showings in selected cities. One could call their emergence on video their American debut.

It was well worth the wait. Kieslowski, who is best known for *The Double Life of Veronique* and his colors trilogy (*Blue*, *White* and *Red*), made this extraordinary series of 50-minute television films in 1988 and 1989. He co-wrote the scripts with Krzysztof Piesiewicz and set all ten stories in the same high-rise apartment complex in Warsaw. Each segment deals with one of the Ten Commandments.

The results are mesmerizing. Reportedly, Stanley Kubrick was a great admirer of the series and showed the films to Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. Celebrity endorsements aside, *The Decalogue* is for anyone who cares about film as an adult medium capable of holding a mirror up to humanity. The films are insightful, sometimes painful, even heartbreaking.

Bravo to Facets Multimedia in Chicago for bringing these films to a wide audience. For more information, contact Facets at 800-331-6197—then prepare to be enlightened, challenged and moved. —L.M.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off camera

Gordon: Actors' director.

Keith Gordon became an actor by chance but a director by design. Most moviegoers will remember his youthful performances in such films as *Dressed to Kill*, *Back to School*, *All That Jazz* and *Christine*.

All that time, he was carefully observing his directors, pumping people like Brian De Palma and Bob Fosse with questions, planning for the day when he would take his place behind the camera.

His latest film, *Waking the Dead*, is his most impressive yet. His previous efforts, *The Chocolate War*, *A Midnight Clear* and *Mother Night*, didn't set box-office records. But they are exactly the kinds of movies he wants to direct.

"The movies that I grew up on weren't indie films back then. *The Conversation*, *The Godfather*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver*—those were mainstream movies. Those were the movies I loved; they were challenging and upsetting. I'm still of the same mind-set. I want to make something that has meaning to my heart. I didn't say I want to be a rebel and make movies no one sees."

As a former actor, he enjoys the interaction with his cast. "I love the whole process of working with actors, the discovery; the surprises are wonderful."

Like any good filmmaker, Gordon is resourceful. But he has one ace up his sleeve that few of his colleagues could call upon.

He and his writing and producing partner Robert Weide wanted Nick Nolte to star in *Mother Night*, but the actor's agent turned them down. So Gordon, a member of the Screen Actors Guild, got himself a two-day part in *I Love Trouble* just to be on the same set as Nolte. Gordon introduced himself and handed him the script, and a little later, Nolte said yes. —L.M.

suburbia, this adaptation by first-time writer-director Sofia Coppola gets many things right but still left me wanting. The story of the five attractive, overprotected Lisbon sisters (Kirsten Dunst is Lux, the eldest), their sorry fate and how their unattainable loveliness haunts neighborhood boys never captures the sense of yearning it strives for. The tale deliberately leaves key issues unexplained, which may have worked better on paper than it does on film; the girls' ethereal quality, the source of their incredible allure, is perhaps the ultimate mystery. There are compensations: Coppola defines the time and place well and paints a vivid picture of the Lisbon household, with James Woods and Kathleen Turner contributing wonderful performances as the girls' awkward, uptight parents. ¥¥½

•

What possible benefit can there be to watching a film about a man so alienated that his only release is to bash people's heads in? This "nightly blood lust" is the curse of the protagonist, an idle-rich Wall Street slacker, in ***American Psycho*** (Lions Gate), the much-talked-about movie adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis' novel. Christian Bale does an exemplary job as the young man who says early on, in his first-person narration, that he has "only two human traits: greed and disgust." What more could you ask for in a leading character? Yes, *American Psycho* offers a satiric take on the emptiness of a generation that lusted only for the trappings of success and conformity, but that point is well made in the first three minutes of the film. The rest is pointless. ¥

•

There is no free lunch in paradise. That's the moral of ***The Beach*** (20th Century Fox), a film that deals with such imposing issues as desire, fulfillment and moral integrity. To call it uneven is a compliment, but at least it's never dull. Leonardo DiCaprio stars as an American who goes to Bangkok in search of anything that will shake him out of his middle-class malaise. He thinks he's found it when he and a French couple follow a map to an isolated, idyllic beach where they join a commune of social dropouts. Moviegoers who have never seen *Lord of the Flies*, *Apocalypse Now* or *The Deer Hunter* might be receptive to this film and DiCaprio's overly earnest first-person ruminations. But one might have expected something less naive and a bit more satisfying from the team that made *Trainspotting*—director Danny Boyle, screenwriter John Hodge (working from Alex Garland's novel) and producer Andrew Macdonald. ¥¥½

MOVIE SCORE CARD

capsule close-ups of current films by leonard maltin

American Psycho (See review) Christian Bale stars as an Eighties Wall Streeter who loathes himself and practically everyone around him, so he does what anyone would in that situation: He becomes a serial killer. ¥

The Beach (See review) Leonardo DiCaprio plays an American who goes to the Far East in search of stimulus—and instead finds paradise. Aims high but falls short. ¥¥½

Boiler Room (Reviewed 4/00) Giovanni Ribisi plays a college dropout who goes to work at a maverick brokerage house where success seems too good to be true—and is. Ben Affleck has a showy cameo. ¥¥¥

The Closer You Get (See review) An Irish comedy about islanders who advertise for female companionship. ¥¥½

Deterrence (4/00) Kevin Pollak is a U.S. president with no popular mandate who is forced to play nuclear brinkmanship while snowed in at a Colorado diner. ¥¥¥

Holy Smoke (2/00) A bizarre, often infuriating film from Jane Campion about sexual politics and mind games that ignite the relationship between a cult deprogrammer (Harvey Keitel) and his subject (Kate Winslet). ¥¥½

The Next Best Thing (Listed only) The worst thing to happen to Madonna and Rupert Everett was being cast in this dreary soap opera about a single woman who has a child with her best friend, who is gay. ¥

Pitch Black (4/00) After they crash-land on a remote planet, a motley group of survivors have to endure one another, some frightening, unknown assailants and the coming of darkness. ¥¥

Soft Fruit (See review) In this Aussie import, a mother's illness brings her grown children home but can't solve their problems. ¥¥

The Virgin Suicides (See review) Kirsten Dunst stars as one of five seemingly perfect sisters in Seventies suburbia whose closeness (and loveliness) masks a dark side that's about to overpower them. Sofia Coppola's adaptation of the Jeffrey Eugenides novel doesn't quite come off. ¥¥½

Waking the Dead (See review) Billy Crudup and Jennifer Connelly play opposites who fall in love so passionately that nothing—not even death—can dispel it. ¥¥¥

¥¥¥¥ Don't miss ¥¥ Worth a look
¥¥¥ Good show ¥ Forget it

GUEST SHOT

"*The Best Years of Our Lives* is one of the most phenomenal movies ever made, says **Fred Savage**, the former star of *The Wonder Years*. "And so are *Hail the Conquering Hero* and *Palm Beach Story*—I'm a big fan of anything by Preston Sturges and Willie Wyler. Recently, I rented *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. I went through many phases with that movie. When you see it as a kid, it's amazing. In college I got into these drug-induced psychedelic interpretations. But now—I don't know what phase of my life I'm in and why this reflects it—I'm really in tune with the homoeroticism of the movie. The Oompa-Loompas, all the tunnels, Charlie and his grandpa rising with the bubbles, and Augustus Gloop going through that tube after landing in fudge. And the chicks are hot." —SUSAN KARLIN

SPARTANS TO SPARE

Ridley Scott's big-budget *Gladiator*, on screens this month, brings legitimacy to the often-cheesy sword-and-sandal genre. *Fromage* aside, we can't get enough of those loincloths and broadswords.

Hercules (1959): "Half god, half pagan!" Proto–sex symbol Steve Reeves, the Fifties' Mr. Universe, kick starts the genre with this Italian production. Based way too seriously on the poem *Argonautica*.

Hercules (1983): Lou Ferrigno washes off the green Hulk paint to kick some Greek ass in this latter-day knockoff. Better, but not great.

Spartacus (1960): One of the manliest movies of all time, even with that bath scene featuring Tony Curtis and Laurence Olivier. Duels to the death, battles of thousands, crucifixions and sinewy Kirk Douglas—what's not to like? Four Oscars, including best picture.

Jason and the Argonauts (1963): Before digital effects were routine, FX master Ray Harryhausen gave every kid nightmares with his stop-motion monsters. DVD includes interviews with Harryhausen and John Landis. Watch out for those Harpies!

Ben-Hur (1959): The world's first high-speed chase scene has Charlton Heston in full biblical epic mode. Eleven Oscars, including best picture.

Masada (1981): One of the better TV minis of the Eighties tells the true story of "the Jewish Alamo," in which a handful of Jews defend a plateau fortress against Roman legions in 75 A.D. Intrigue and action—394 minutes' worth.

Barbarian Queen (1985): High camp as pre-*Xena* femme warrior Lana Clarkson dons a double-D breastplate to avenge her village. Best scene: Lana's five minutes on the torture rack give us an idea about getting one of our own.

The Last Temptation of Christ (1988): Gladiator movie? Who do you think the bad guys are? New on DVD.

Red Sonja (1985): A sequel of sorts to *Conan the Barbarian*. Pre-implant Brigitte Nielsen swings a mean broadsword without breaking a nail. Got to like that in a Barbarian babe.

Hercules in New York (1970): Time-traveling muscleman Herc takes a chariot ride through Central Park. Title role played by debuting actor Arnold Strong, who later went back to using his given name, Schwarzenegger. —BUZZ MCCLAIN

Guilty Pleasure of the Month

It might not be WCW or the WWF, but ***Wrasslin' She-Babes*** (Something Weird Video; 206-361-3759) is oddly fascinating. Shot in rec rooms and backyards in the Fifties and Sixties and starring cat-fighting housewives in mod bikinis, these delightfully retrograde black-and-white 8mm films-on-VHS reflect how hard it was to get a thrill in early suburbia. The women aren't Sables—hell, they aren't even Mankinds—but they almost always end up topless. Unbelievably, there are 17 two-hour volumes. —BUZZ MCCLAIN

DISC ALERT

Decades before *The Blair Witch Project* spooked horror fans and Hollywood suits (who struggled to understand its success), an industrial filmmaker named Herk Harvey and a cast of unknowns created a low-budget creeper that shocked the film community. Although its makers didn't benefit from modern media's ability to generate *Blair Witch*–style commercial phenomena, ***Carnival of Souls*** became a cult classic. Which is why this 1962 B-grade zombie fest is getting the full Criterion Collection treatment on DVD (Voyager, $40) with both the original 84-minute cut (in a new digital transfer) and an extended director's cut on two separate discs. In addition, the extraordinary package features a documentary, "The Movie That Wouldn't Die! The Story of Carnival of Souls," a trailer, 45 minutes of excised footage, a tour of the movie's locations, interviews and essays. There is even an hour of excerpts from some of the industrial films made by Centron Corporation, the company that employed Harvey and screenwriter John Clifford. And they did it all without websites. —GREGORY P. FAGAN

video mood meter

MOOD	MOVIE
MUST-SEE	***Fight Club*** (Norton cures modern life's flaccid, Gap-clad torpor by joining Pitt's brutal brawlers; exhilaratingly vile), ***The Insider*** (Michael Mann cleans *60 Minutes*' clock; vintage Pacino, and Christopher Plummer makes a great Mike Wallace).
COMEDY	***Being John Malkovich*** (John Cusack finds a portal into the titular star's mind; provocative laughs from director Spike Jonze), ***The Best Man*** (in his semibiographical novel, which the groom is reading, he did the bride; fun, if a bit sitcommy).
ROMANCE	***The Story of Us*** (Willis and Pfeiffer bicker crisply as 15-year spouses questioning their bond; more light-handed than the title), ***Mansfield Park*** (poor cousin Frances O'Connor stirs the pot at her uncle's estate; Jane Austen, deftly adapted).
AUTEUR	***The Straight Story*** (an old man embarks on a cross-Iowa lawn-mower odyssey; director David Lynch's blithely off-kilter America), ***Bringing Out the Dead*** (spooked Gotham EMT Cage seeks redemption; Scorsese's latest is no *Taxi Driver*).
DYSFUNCTION	***Joe the King*** (in fact, he's 14 and destined for crime; Frank Whaley's well-acted—by Val Kilmer and others—if one-note, directing bow), ***Julien Donkey-Boy*** (freaks and family revolve around a schizo hero; for the adventuresome only).

living online

By MARK FRAUENFELDER

BRITANNICA.COM

This month, my favorite search engine is **Britannica.com.** When you search here, you get Britannica's insightful reviews of the best sites on the web. You also get a list of links to related articles that have appeared in various online versions of major print publications. Of course, Britannica.com includes the complete text of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the same one that those door-to-door salesmen used to guilt-trip your parents into buying. The site's daily features and news items are excellent, and you can sign up for four different e-mail newsletters, including a useful "site of the day" bulletin.

MORE ON DRIPS

A few months back I wrote about online Dividend Reinvestment Plans, which let you buy stock directly from a company, free of the usual commissions. Now a couple of financial sites have cooked up a way to let you make Driplike investments in Dripless companies. The term for these services is ugly—Synthetic Direct Investment Providers—but the idea behind them is simple. You send an SDIP a payment, and it buys stock and puts it in your account. The two main SDIPs are **BuyandHold.com** and **ShareBuilder.com.** There's no charge to open an account, and each company collects a small fee for every recurring stock purchase you make ($2.99 for BuyandHold and $2 for ShareBuilder). You can buy as much or as little of a stock as you want. ShareBuilder charges an annual fee of $11.95, and if you make five or more commission-generating transactions a year with BuyandHold, you can avoid its $15 inactivity fee. The big difference between the two is the fee they charge for making an immediate (as opposed to regular weekly or monthly) purchase or sale of stock: BuyandHold collects its standard $2.99, but ShareBuilder hits you for $19.95. Check for an update on terms.

RETRO PAD ACCOUTREMENTS

If I could afford it, every item in my house would come from Track 16 Vintage (**track16vintage.com**), a site that deals in high-quality 20th century Americana and collectibles. My cupboards would be filled with china from defunct Polynesian restaurants, my walls would be adorned with a Butter-Nut Coffee Clock ($1100) and an animated Burger Meister sign ($700); my desk would have a metallic-blue Crosley radio ($599) on it and a 1951 Schwinn Black Phantom bicycle ($3200) would go in the garage.

WORLD WIDE WEEGEE

America loves mobsters. From Scorsese to *The Sopranos*, we can't get enough of the money-laundering, gun-running, dope-selling, pinkie-ringed thugs. Nobody did a better job of capturing (and, some would say, creating) the legendary image of the mobster than Weegee, a tabloid photographer who became famous in the Thirties and Forties for his pictures of gunned-down gangsters, sneering handcuffed punks and broken-down Bowery barflies. The cigar-chewing Weegee had a police radio in his car, often arriving at the scene of a bloody gangland shootout before the cops. Take a look at the photographs at Weegee's World (**icp.org/weegee**). When you get over the initial fascination of seeing a wiseguy flat on the sidewalk, covered in bloody newspapers, you'll notice the real subject of the picture—the crowd of bystanders, who are as enraptured with the scene as you are. Nobody can match Weegee for bringing noir to light.

QUICK HITS

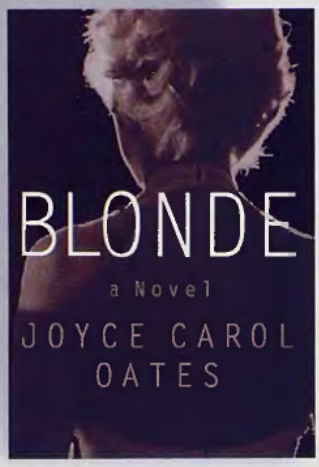
Tired of pasta? Find out how to make Japanese-style marinated salmon and thousands of other dishes at **ucook.com.** Get the best interest rates for credit cards, home and car loans at **bankrate.com.** Surfers with patience or high-speed connections will enjoy the trailers at **movie-list.com.** Send a kitschy vintage pinup e-postcard to a friend from **erotic-cards.com.**

You can contact Mark Frauenfelder by e-mail at livingonline @playboy.com.

books

GO AND CATCH A FALLING STAR

When it came to Marilyn Monroe, the public was always on the outside looking in. But in her riveting new novel ***Blonde*** (Ecco), Joyce Carol Oates reverses that dynamic by stepping inside the actress' tortured psyche to produce a shockingly intimate portrait. Oates warns that while *Blonde* scrutinizes an actual life, it is not a historic document. If you are wont to split platinum hairs (for example, Monroe grew up in several foster homes, not just one, as Oates claims), this book will be more irritating than enlightening. But if you grant the author some biographical latitude, you'll discover a fascinating imagining of the hellish battles that Monroe fought with herself. Most of those internal skirmishes centered on Monroe's lack of self-worth. Her mother was mentally unstable, she never knew her father and she grew up neglected and abused. Even though she became Hollywood's most beloved sex symbol, Marilyn couldn't escape her bitter past and never truly accepted the adulation of her public. She felt like a fraud and a freak, and when "looking into any mirror, she saw not the Fair Princess whom the world saw and marveled over, but her old Beggar Maid self." *Blonde* is highly abstract and not always an easy read. But then nothing this good ever is.



—JOHN D. THOMAS

MAGNIFICENT OBSESSIONS

Sometimes a person lives long enough to see the whole world change. Norma Wallace ran a house of assignation in the French Quarter from the Twenties to the Sixties, embracing the demimonde from the days of Storyville to the summer of love. In ***The Last Madam: A Life in the New Orleans Underworld*** (Faber and Faber), Christine Wiltz chronicles the story of this remarkably smart woman, who understood the importance of payoffs and discretion. Wallace counted among her customers some of New Orleans' most prestigious judges, bankers and politicians—which explains why she spent only six weeks in Parish Prison during her 40 years of business. Even John Wayne visited her parlor house one evening (but supposedly didn't go upstairs). *Last Madam* is a seductive look at a lost time.

—LEOPOLD FROEHLICH

DON'T MENTION IT

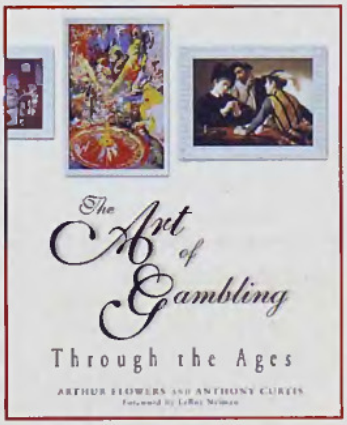
If Rudy Giuliani were running for the Senate in Massachusetts rather than in New York, he'd try to get mileage—or at least headlines—out of what he would describe as a decline in standards at Harvard and MIT. Harvard Press has published *Teaching Sex*, and MIT has released a volume titled *History of Shit*. These titles certainly challenge our traditional ideas about university press topics. There is nothing stuffy here. Politics and morality have always been central to sex education in the U.S., which is why it seems so ineffective. In ***Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century,*** Jeffrey Moran provides an engrossing chronicle and thoughtful analysis of government-sanctioned programs designed for a captive audience of high school students. The challenge has been to present enough information to link sex to venereal disease and unintended pregnancy, but not so much as to arouse sexual interest. Moran's painstaking research reveals how sex education has always been reactive, from the feeble attempts to remedy the VD epidemic in the early part of the century—American soldiers were indoctrinated with scary movies—to the desperate and politically charged response to the AIDS crisis at the end of it. Since the Sixties, sex educators have been repeatedly thwarted by holier-than-thou reactionaries with political agendas, especially on themes such as contraceptives and abortion. But Moran also takes educators to task for not taking into account the interest of those they purport to be teaching. His book is a must-read. ***History of Shit*** (MIT) is an English translation of an eccentric piece of theoretical investigation penned by French psychoanalyst and writer Dominique Laporte in 1978. It would be hard to imagine anyone passing up at least a quick look in the bookstore. "We dare not speak about shit," he said. "But, since the beginning of time, no other subject—not even sex—has caused us to speak so much." Laporte, relying mostly on examples from Western culture, connects the unspeakable to divinity, government, art and language to show what role the management of human waste has played in the rise of civilization.

MIKE CRESSY

—PAUL ENGLEMAN

LUCK OF THE DRAW:

Games of chance have been a source of fascination since man first rolled the bones. Gambling has become a $40 billion-a-year industry in this country alone, generating more revenue than movies, spectator sports, theme parks, cruise ships and recorded music combined. ***The Art of Gambling Through the Ages*** (Huntington) by Arthur Flowers and Anthony Curtis (with a foreword by our own LeRoy Neiman) chronicles winning and losing as seen through the eyes of celebrated painters and sculptors, including Cézonne, Picasso, van Gogh, Degas and Remington. Las Vegas' Bellagio Hotel's multimillion-dollar art collection just continues this relationship. Trust us, *The Art of Gambling* is a sure bet.



—HELEN FRANGOULIS

By ASA BABER

AMANDA DUFF

THE ALL-NUDE CENTURY

MANY OF my male readers are asking important questions as they confront 21st century situations unlike any they have encountered before. They cover a range of topics and reveal some startling insecurities about the future. After reading my mail, it's clear to me that men are now the anxious and overburdened sex:

(1) *Dear Ace: If global warming is a serious 21st century threat, will women eventually become nudists to escape the heat? And how should I behave if that happens?* (Gary Dee, Morass, Ohio.)

Dear Gary: Global warming is here to stay, which means most women will be forced to become nudists within the next decade. Most men, of course, would use global warming as an excuse to go totally nude tomorrow. Yes, Gary, there are differences between the sexes that will never be resolved. As for your concerns about a planet full of naked ladies, I assume you're afraid of getting an erection while walking nude down the street or shopping for groceries or gathering around the coffee machine at work. The best thing to do in these potentially embarrassing situations is to think about something nonsexual and off-putting, like your Uncle Elmer's big fat butt. But if your willie rises anyway, just curl up, fall to the ground and claim you are having a Big Mac attack.

(2) *Dear Mr. Baber: I have been selected as one of the first astronauts to land on Mars. My question is: While traveling in our spacecraft with a coed crew, must I refrain from farting (and telling fart jokes)? I'm afraid such activities might alienate some of the women on board, though I think the guys would really enjoy them.* (Lance Thrust, Deadman Ridge, Nevada.)

Dear Lance: I know that farting and fart jokes are great morale boosters for all-male crews, but let me ask you to join the 21st century workplace, where political correctness reigns. As in any contemporary corporate endeavor, it is your job to accommodate the most sensitive and puritanical persons NASA might recruit. Newcomers have all the power now, not you old-timers, and you are expected to adjust to them. So here is the new Golden Rule for the 21st century: NO FARTING IN THE WORKPLACE. You and your boys had better take up knitting and hold your sphincters high, tight and silent during the Mars mission (or it will be an ill wind that blows no man good, if you know what I mean).

(3) *Dear Assa Barber: I think the woman I'm currently dating might be an alien in disguise. Is there any way I can verify her identity before it's too late?* (Michael Unisys, Forked Tongue, New York.)

Dear Michael: I'm sorry that you don't know how to spell my name correctly, but I'm not a petty man, so I won't mention it. In regard to the woman (or alien) you are dating, here's the problem: Any woman you date will seem like an alien at one time or another during the relationship, so sorting out the wheat from the chaff can be difficult. In addition, there are hundreds of thousands of different types of aliens, and many of them assume humanoid shapes to deceive us. But my sources tell me there are certain characteristics that give them away. For example, all female aliens: (a) dislike giving oral sex but love receiving it, (b) are fond of diamonds and precious gems, (c) talk too much, (d) suffer mood swings on a monthly basis and (e) think men are basically jerks with no redeeming qualities. I hope this list of female alien traits helps you in your investigation, Mike, and may the Force be with you big-time, buddy!

(4) *Dear Asa: Several years ago I volunteered to be the first human being to enter a black hole under laboratory conditions and experience time travel just as Einstein predicted it. The result? I am now my own grandfather, my wife is Helen of Troy and my primary language is Old Norse. What's more, the black hole tore me apart physically and reassembled me incorrectly, so my ass is now my face and I shit through my nose. Can you help me?* (Benny Beowolf, Wrinkled Leaf, Nova Scotia.)

Benny Baby: There is nothing I can do for you, but I'd like to meet your wife. Tell her to give me a call at the magazine. We would love to have her as a Centerfold, but she should send us some Polaroids first.

(5) *Dear Mr. Men Columnist: I farm approximately 10,000 acres of rich Midwestern topsoil. We raise corn and wheat and beans, as well as hogs and cattle and vegetables. We use the most modern agricultural methods and products available, and we try to limit our use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizer. But, as you know, some city people are worried about the effects of genetically altered food on the human race. Would you please tell your readers that everything is A-OK down on the farm and that there's nothing whatsoever to worry about?* (Clyde Drexelhammer, Athens, Illinois.)

Dear Clyde: First, congratulations on the prizes you won this year at the Illinois State Fair. Your 20,000-pound bull, Wolfman Jacked, is as gorgeous an animal as I've seen, and the chickens with ten legs are going to make a great contribution to our fast-food franchises. I also enjoyed the eight-foot-long corn cobs with the kernels that pop as soon as you urinate on them—and whoever thought a tomato could grow large enough to serve as a garage for a Kenworth 18-wheeler? Of course, I miss the water we used to get from Lake Michigan and our other lakes, wells and streams, but I'm sure we will be able to fly-in the water (from Antarctic icebergs) that's free of the chemicals we spread on the land that then leach into our water table. "Win some, lose some," I say. Let those wussies who gripe about the damage that farming does to our environment move to another planet. As my T-shirt says, THE EARTH: FUCK IT OR LEAVE IT.

(6) *Dear Asa Baber: I am a former CIA officer who now serves as financial advisor to Saddam Hussein, Osama bin-Laden, several Colombian drug lords and Don Imus, the popular radio and MSNBC talk-show host. My knowledge of banking practices and surveillance techniques gives me a distinct advantage when it comes to protecting my clients' interests, and I am doing well professionally. But, do you think any of the guys I just named would ever turn on me, possibly even kill me?* (Dexter Fibbs, Moonshine, Michigan.)

Dear Dexter: You've really scammed the system, haven't you? After all that training you received from Uncle Sam, you are now using your skills against him. That's opportunism at its best, fella. As for the men you named, the only person I would really fear on that list is Imus. Saddam is predictable, Osama is in hiding and the drug lords are too rich to be bothered by the likes of you, but Imus is a special case. He is a bitter and driven and an amusing man who can compliment you one minute and attack you the next, so watch your six. He has what Shakespeare would describe as "a lean and hungry look"—but then, so do rattlesnakes and pit bulls.

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golf

By BEN WRIGHT

SPRING TUNE-UP

Many extraordinary changes have been wrought in the game of golf during the last half-century or so. The low-tech but aesthetically pleasing wood—in the shape of polished persimmon club heads and delicate hickory shafts—has been replaced by rugged metals, fibers and plastics. They're loud and utilitarian, but powerful and effective. And so forgiving and user-friendly.

The advent of the electric or gas-powered two-seat golf cart has done absolutely nothing to speed up play and has destroyed the game as a healthy walking pastime. Televised big-time golf has caused so many hackers to ape their prodigiously talented but painstaking idols that the pace of play has regressed from barely acceptable to downright funereal.

Golf courses have sprung up all over America and abroad that are so expensive, complicated and contrived that for ordinary amateurs they are little fun to play. Most damaging, they have kept the costs of a once-elitist sport far too high for the little guy on the street, the kind of player that Tiger Woods is attracting in droves.

The most radical development in golf has been its change in status from a minor sport and rich man's pastime to a major athletic pursuit with fanatics every bit as fervent as religious converts. Nowadays, any self-respecting, ambitious businessperson who doesn't play golf can easily find himself treated as an outsider.

When I started in golf, the game was held in low esteem because the majority of amateurs turned to it only when they became too decrepit to play a "real" sport. Youngsters were in such short supply they were regarded almost as freaks, and thus were largely ignored, if not actively persecuted. Or else they caddied for coolie wages. It didn't matter if you were desperately overweight, smoked liked a chimney and drank like a fish. There weren't any touring professionals, and the club varieties were regarded as second-class citizens. If they were allowed in the clubhouse at all, they ate their meals in the kitchen.

One of the early photographs that once graced my bedroom wall was that of American Ed "Porky" Oliver, a tournament winner on the fledgling PGA Tour in the Forties, whose rotundity, he said, helped him keep a slow and easy rhythm. Oliver lost a playoff for the All-American Open in 1947 to the legendary South African Bobby Locke, whose nickname, the Bishop, was derived from his sagging cheeks (or chops) and his oversize stomach. More rudely, Locke was also known as Old Muffin Face, but he won four British Opens and a small fortune in countless tournament victories in the U.S., Europe and South Africa. Bobby Locke might just have been the best putter I ever saw, which was probably why some of his more jealous American rivals caused his suspension from the tour here on a technicality in 1949.

Talking of fabulous putters—when Jack Nicklaus first appeared as an amateur on the American Walker Cup team for the match against Britain and Ireland at Muirfield in 1959—the fine British writer Pat Ward-Thomas spoke to me of Jack and his foursome partner Ward Wettlaufer as "two formidable porkers."

A decade later, Nicklaus worked especially hard to become the svelte athlete whose figure he has maintained slavishly to this day. He and Arnold Palmer were even persuaded to give up smoking, while South African Gary Player, the first major figure in the game to make fitness fanaticism fashionable, can point to his extraordinary record of longevity—with victories in five different decades—as showing the right way of approaching golf to the youth of today.

How they have followed the lead of the little South African—pound for pound the best golfer I have ever seen, at least since the time of his one-time idol Ben Hogan. You will not find many touring professionals touching hard liquor or even smoking today. They are too busy exercising with weights, working out in gyms or in the PGA Tour's traveling fitness trailer, or out jogging.

Athletic clones by the hundreds spill off the college campuses every year, including the best young foreign amateurs recruited from all over the world. Tiger Woods turned 24 last December and is already being compared to Nicklaus, who turned 60 on January 21, 2000. Spaniard Sergio Garcia is only 20. Aaron Baddeley, a 19-year-old amateur, won the Australian Open last November, holding off, among others, that supreme Aussie athlete and matinee idol Greg Norman. I think of the serious cocktails I enjoyed alongside three-time Masters winner (shall we call him burly?) Jimmy Demaret, the ever colorful Texan, in the men's grill at Augusta National Golf Club in the distant past—and I realize the era is indeed a bygone one.

A.J. GARCES (2)

Enough already. Hell-raising beer bellies and serious golf no longer go together. It's time to face the inevitable facts: Limber-backed youths rule the day. But it was fun while it lasted. Just don't tell me that golfers aren't real athletes anymore.

"DO YOU LIKE TO BE TIED UP?" YES. "BLINDFOLDED?" YES

BY BRIAN PRESTON

HER VOICE sounded Australian. "My name is Mona. I'm a sexy, kinky 23-year-old, five foot four, 115 pounds, brown hair, blue eyes. I'm just looking for some good conversation."

This wasn't a 900 number or some other scam like that. I'd just moved to a new city where I knew no women, so I'd joined a telepersonals service in which people record ads (and respond to others') over the phone. There were hundreds of ads from women looking for long-term relationships with honest, sincere men. They all wanted someone "financially and emotionally secure." Not feeling up to that, I browsed through a subcategory called Phone Encounters, and encountered Mona.

It was ten A.M. and I was just waking up. By pressing a button on my phone I found out Mona was online at that moment. Soon we were connected.

"What kind of conversation do you like?" she asked.

"Well, what kind do *you* like?"

"Something sexy," she said. "Tell me what you'd do to me."

She had used the word kinky in her ad, so I went for kink. "Do you like to be tied up?" Yes. "Blindfolded?" Yes.

I told her a story. It began with my picking her up at her place, putting her in the passenger seat of my sports car, handcuffing her hands behind the seat and driving with one hand while running my other up under her skirt, playing with her. She climaxed against my fingers while a trucker in the next lane looked down from his window and watched her face flush and her hips buck as her arms fought against the restraint.

From there we went to my house in the country and, well, you get the idea. It was a mishmash of *Story of O* and a bunch of other B-grade porn that's been percolating in the recesses of my skull, obviously waiting for a chance to spew forth. It kind of took me by surprise.

Even more surprising, Mona was totally into it. She came twice, once "in the car" and once at the house after a bubble bath, standing bent over with her hands on the tub, letting me take her in the ass. She started grunting into the phone, "Fuck me hard! Fuck me harder!" This time we came together.

Afterward there was awkward silence, and I felt a momentary depression. Phone sex situates you somewhere between sex and masturbation—you have the advantage of being able to say "How was it for you?" to someone, and the disadvantage of having to wipe the come off your belly yourself.

"Wow. That was weird," Mona said. "I've never actually had anal sex, and I'm not sure I'd like it. Wouldn't it hurt?"

She was from New Zealand. She had married an American two months earlier and was waiting for her work papers to be processed. Her husband went to work every morning, and since she was bored sitting around the apartment he'd given her grudging permission to kill time on the chat lines, where, as they all advertise, "women call for free." She had to promise not to meet anyone in person.

Within those parameters, Mona and I began a relationship. We both used that word to describe it. We exchanged home numbers. Almost every day we talked. We didn't have phone sex every time. We had two kinds of conversations, two sets of selves. Our real selves yakked about life, love, career, money, family, philosophy, beliefs. Our phone-sex selves had a strict agenda, in which I was dominant and she submissive, the way she liked it. Our phone-sex selves kicked in when she'd say, "Tell me a story."

She found phone sex liberating. Although she liked sex with her new husband, she was kinkier than he was and had trouble asking him for what she wanted. Over the phone with me she felt completely free and would eagerly offer herself up to all manner of imagined degradations. I can still hear her soft voice: "I need to be punished. How would you punish me?" Maybe these phone fantasies were the only times she opened up to deep desires.

In one of our "sessions" I used clothespins on her nipples; a few days later she told me she'd asked her husband to do it for real—to tie her up and pinch her nipples with clothespins.

"Did he get into it?"

"I'm not really sure," she said. "But he couldn't believe how wet I got."

It was strange, but within a couple of weeks I became totally infatuated with Mona. I suffered like a lovelorn when she didn't call. Once when I phoned her she hastily whispered that her husband hadn't gone to work and she couldn't talk. Click. I couldn't believe how jealous I felt.

I talked her into meeting me. It wasn't difficult. The phone sex we shared was hot, kinky and fun, and with all that fantasy fucking it was natural for both of us to wonder what the other's real presence would be like.

We met in a local mall. She was far more beautiful than I'd prepared myself for, with a sensual, I-dare-you smile. She was showing off nice cleavage. That confident, commanding, dominant male—my phone-sex persona—evaporated, and I felt like a mushy adolescent, mooning at the same woman I'd heard moaning plaintively through the phone line two days earlier, begging me to bite her nipples. I told her I would like to do everything we'd ever talked about. She sighed, "Why did I get married?" We ended up in a taxi. There was a moment when I could have ordered the driver to take us to my *(concluded on page 172)*

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Batman, Eat Your Heart Out

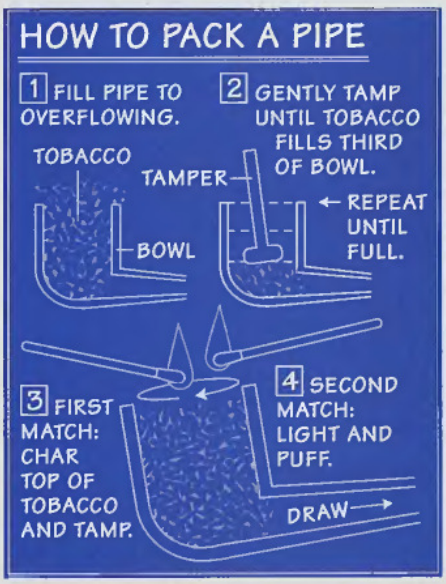
You don't dock an Armodo just onywhere, you keep it in the Bot Cove. If there ever were o powerboot sure to turn heods, drop jows ond jump-stort libidos, this is it. Sweden's Ocke Monnerfelt Design wos the genius behind the innovotive styling ond structure of both the conopied V-24 (above) and the topless B-28 (obove, ot right). The wings on both crofts creote lift ond stobility, we've been told, something you'll need when you fire up the Volvo Pento V8 (with either 385, 415, 500 or 600 horsepower) thot's under the sloping hood. Armodo soys the wings keep the altitude completely level, "ollowing for o smoother reentry to water while mointoining speed." In other words, you'll be flying—literally. The compony olso soys it employs o fiberglass overloy for odditionol strength both inside ond out rother thon o "shoe-box joint" where the hull ond deck meet. It's o good thing, becouse the boot's top speed is 95 or so—if you hove the cojones to hong on. The V-24 (which is often used for rocing) costs obout $65,000, plus options. The B-28 tokes off ot obout $90,000, plus options, of which there ore many. Coll Armodo ot 606-726-9574 to heor more details.

A Simple Pasta

A meot souce is o versotile occomponiment to spoghetti, linguine or penne. Moking it from scrotch is eosy. This recipe is odopted from *A Pinch of This and a Pinch of That: Mama Lena's Italian Kitchen*, a book bosed on the cooking ot one of our fovorite restouronts in Chicogo. First, heot some olive oil in o pon, then odd chopped gorlic and red pepper flokes. Souté o chopped onion ond obout o pound of leon ground meot—beef, turkey or pork. Brown the meot for obout five minutes on high. Stroin it, letting ony grease pour off. Wipe the pon, but don't wosh it. Add o pound of seeded ond crushed ripe tomotoes (or o 15 oz. con of droined plum tomotoes), two tablespoons of tomoto poste ond o 15 oz. con of woter. Add o few pinches of bosil, sugor ond oregono. Mix well ond cover the pon. Cook on medium high for 30 minutes. Add the soutéed meot, onions ond gorlic. Cook the souce on medium low for 15 minutes. Turn off the heot; let the souce settle for ten minutes. Serve over posto.

The Pipe's Back

Is the price of premium stogies still o bit much? Lighten up—it tokes less thon o buck's worth of tobocco to fill o pipe, ond the smoke losts os long os o double corono. First, moke sure your tobocco is properly humidified—70 percent is ideol. (It should feel slightly moist.) Fill the bowl with tobocco. Top the side of the bowl to settle the tobocco, then gently tomp the tobocco down so it feels springy. Repeot this process two more times, until the bowl is filled to the top. It takes two motches to light o pipe. First is the "folse light." While puffing slowly, wolk the flome over the entire surface of the tobocco, chorring it evenly. Then tomp gently. This creotes o cop thot ensures on even light with the second motch.


HOW TO PACK A PIPE
1 FILL PIPE TO OVERFLOWING.
2 GENTLY TAMP UNTIL TOBACCO FILLS THIRD OF BOWL.
TOBACCO
TAMPER
BOWL
REPEAT UNTIL FULL.
3 FIRST MATCH: CHAR TOP OF TOBACCO AND TAMP.
4 SECOND MATCH: LIGHT AND PUFF.
DRAW

MANTRACK

Vintage Wyatt

Paul Wyatt is to wine cellars what Bacchus is to grapes. For 20 years Wyatt has designed custom storage (primarily for private collectors), and his racks hold many of the world's finest vintages. Wyatt's philosophy of wine storage calls for open racks, as pictured here, which allow more air to circulate, minimizing the growth of mildew on labels and capsules. His work isn't cheap: A three-foot closet with hardwood racks (either jarrah from Australia or mahogany from Guatemala) costs about $2500, not including a cooling system. But you can spend $250,000 or more. (Wyatt's Fine Wine Rack and Cellar Co. creates only storage facilities.)

Tenting Tonight—Luxuriously

If there's a reason to forsake the pleasures of San Francisco and go camping, it would have to be Castanoa. Situated 55 miles south of the city on the coast, the 4000-acre campground combines the pleasures of an extensive network of biking and hiking trails with such urban amenities as furnished tent bungalows (inset below) and bathrooms with heated floors and a sauna. There's even a gourmet general store. Adjacent to the 40-room main lodge are a dozen cabins, if camping out isn't your thing. Rates start at $95 per night (double occupancy) for tent bungalows, $160 for cabins and $205 for lodge rooms. More-expensive tent accommodations are also available, including some "romantic" tent bungalows situated in remote areas.

Clothesline: Martin Sheen and John Landis

"My personal style?" Martin Sheen (left), the star of *West Wing* and dozens of movies, asks our interviewer. "When I look my best, my wife dressed me. When I don't, I've dressed me. I just put on what's there. What am I wearing today?" (Sheen looks inside his jacket.) "Yes! Giorgio Armani." Sheen also confesses a personal preference for Hawaiian shirts, loafers and white socks. "Right now I have on two pairs of socks because my shoes are too big." Director John Landis (right) says he tends to wear jeans, sports coat and a tie. "I always look nice in Armani. I once went to a charity preview of *Beverly Hills Cop III*, which I directed, and arrived at the hotel 30 minutes early. I gave my suit to the valet to have it pressed and ten minutes later a young girl knocked on my hotel-room door saying, 'We have your suit, Mr. Armani.'"

Guys Are Talking About . . .

Integrated car phones. Mercedes-Benz USA is offering the first integrated portable cellular phone system (pictured here) as an option in all its model-year-2000 cars. Inside the vehicle, you dock a Motorola Startac in a special housing for hands-free operation. Then take the phone with you when you exit the car. Price: $1500 to $2500, depending on options. • *Historic single malts.* Macallan distillery has just introduced a single malt scotch that's been aged 50 years in sherry barrels. Price: $3500, including a decanter. • *Villas on the web.* If you're looking for a European hideaway, check out Rentvillas.com. A tool called Villa Wizard helps simplify the booking process. Plus, candid property reviews from previous renters are available. • *Love in the sky.* Virgin Atlantic has embraced the idea that twosomes in its Upper Class section may want to enjoy the flight in ways other than eating, sleeping or watching a movie. So twin seats that fully recline to a length of 6'8" are being fitted to the fleet. • *Romantic escapes.* Johansens is now listing romantic getaways as part of its *Recommended Travel Guide* series. Choices range from a B&B in La Jolla to a private game reserve in South Africa. Guides cost from $15 to $40.

WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 166.

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■ **Radar-Ball Baseball, #RB-1000 $29.95**

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You're driving a foggy morning highway, your amber lenses enhancing all contrast, while you pick out every detail on the roadway. As the fog lifts, you swap in the prismatic blue lenses. You now enjoy all-around protection and the truest tones. Hitting the beach? Snowboarding the slopes of Kilimanjaro? No problem. Click in the silver mirrors and the most intense light and glare is now reduced to a soothing, refreshing tint. For driving, golfing, or shooting, try the gold mirrors. New Solini Sunglasses give you all four colors, in one interchangeable system! Best of all, each is impact-resistant and rated to the max, banishing the full spectrum of harmful UV rays. Frames are sleek, comfortable, and pure nickel-silver. Comes in a cool case, with hidden slots for all lenses.

■ **Solini™ Chameleon Sunglass System, #TE-77B7 Retail $79.95 Your price $49.95!**

Welcome to the machine.

To access the time on our special Machine Watch, pull the secret release button. Gleaming pistons push and slide, and the cover raises. Click it closed, and it's protected from dust, rain, and impact. 7.25" band to fit almost any wrist. Quartz action is ultra-accurate. Wear it and enjoy the compliments you'll receive – from men, women, and any cyborg you meet.

■ **Machine Watch III, #0340-M ~~$49.95~~ $39.95!**

Strike gold inside this huge stack of 1,400 sealed and unsearched cards.

One of these packs could contain Ken Griffey's rookie issue. A rare 1980's Cal Ripken, or an early Sammy Sosa. These are straight from the old warehouses of Fleer, Donruss, Upper Deck, and Topps. Untouched, unsearched, and unseen. Randomly selected to give you the most variety and luck possible. All 80's and early 90's. All with grand-slam potential. You'll be thrilled as you open each of the 100 packs, not knowing who you'll find. We had a blast with ours! Each pack is still wax sealed, and no two are alike. You'll be flipping your friends for more.

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We opened just 7 packs and look what we found. An early Valenzuela. Roger Clemens. Javy Lopez calling himself Davy. The late Dan Quisenberry. Darryl as a Met. And a Mark McGwire from 1989, looking very beardless!

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The Playboy Advisor

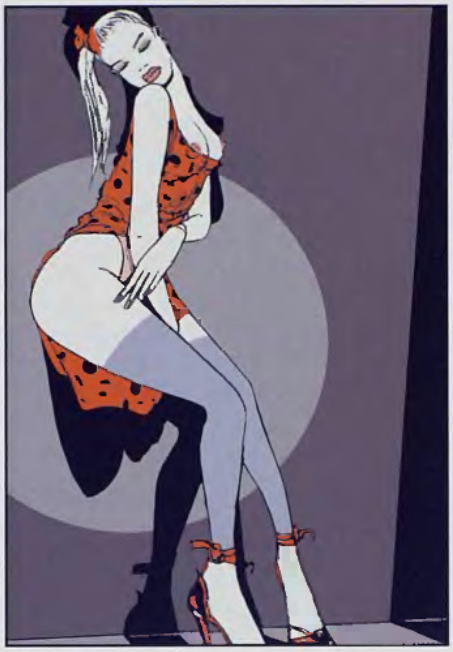
About six months ago, I asked my girlfriend to marry me. Now I've changed my mind. The ring cost me a small fortune, and I would like to get it back. Where do I stand?—G.F., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

She should return it. The modern woman doesn't need a consolation prize. Legally, she has to return it: Numerous state courts, including the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, have ruled that an engagement ring is a "conditional" gift—the condition being that the marriage take place. But take a deep breath before you pursue this. If her family has to eat any deposits on canceled wedding arrangements, the ring is your contribution. If that's not the case, it still might be wise to consider the ring as you would a stock pick that didn't go your way. Say goodbye, then take a fresh look at the market.

Are there any benchmarks that indicate what a man's net worth should be at any given time in his life—e.g., according to his age, the number of years he's been married, the years since he graduated or the years until he retires?—J.L., Mebane, North Carolina

Here's a guide from Thomas Stanley and William Danko, authors of The Millionaire Next Door: Multiply your age by your annual pretax income from all sources except inheritances, then divide by ten. Subtract any inherited wealth, and that's your expected net worth. So, if you're 35 and earning $60,000 annually before taxes, your net worth should be at least $210,000. How do you reach that point? You save. Stanley and Danko found that the typical millionaire sets aside 15 percent of his earned income annually and has enough invested to survive for ten years at his current income if he stopped working. That's not a bad way to measure wealth: If you lost your job tomorrow, how long could you pay yourself the same salary?

My husband has asked me to expose more of myself in public and become the sex kitten of his fantasies. I'm shy, but I could do it. It seems harmless and sort of fun. He's not asking for nude cartwheels, just a casual attitude about buttons and less-careful changing at the beach. I think I'm average, he thinks I'm a gift from the heavens (fair-skinned natural blonde with all the right details for him). We tested gently, and I liked his reaction. But I can't help thinking this is what prostitutes and unfaithful wives do. I wonder why a happily married man wants other men to see his wife's personal areas. He says it's for our sexy thrill, not theirs, plus it's an ego trip. I'd like a second opinion. Is he sick? Is our marriage in trouble? He always has made me



believe I'm special. Is it OK to show it all to please him?—N.B., Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

Of course it's OK. Your husband realizes how desirable you are, and he enjoys watching reactions from less fortunate men. Your innocence turns him on even more. That's human nature and there's nothing wrong with it. If you keep experimenting, you may find your limits expand with experience. But don't overlook the appeal of private shows. Other men blink; your husband can stare, and you should remind him regularly why that's special. Loosen the belt on your robe and lean over to talk to him while he's reading the morning paper. Let him catch you undressing, kick him out and leave the door ajar. Slip into a short skirt, lose your panties, climb into the backseat of the car, and play taxi driver and fare as you shift around and he adjusts the rearview mirror. You have breasts, an ass, the small of a back, a belly and two legs for many reasons. One of them is to drop men's chins.

I travel overseas on business about three times a year and take a laptop and sometimes a printer and my camera. They're made by Japanese companies, so I always wonder when I'm returning home if the Customs agents are going to say I owe duty. I'd like to ask about their policies but don't want to raise suspicions. Can you help me out?—P.T., Tampa, Florida

Unless you can prove that you purchased your foreign-made computer, CD player, watch, camera or other product Stateside, it could be subject to duty. Carry an original receipt. If that's not feasible, you can show the equipment to Customs before you leave the U.S. Visit any field office, situated in major cities or at port-of-entry airports. You can download the necessary form (4455) at www.customs.gov/travel/forms.htm. You'll be given a certificate of registration that lists each item; it's valid for as long as you own or use the equipment.

Last night I was with the girl I've been dating for about two months (I'm 21, and this is the first girlfriend I've had). I told her I loved her. She replied that she "really likes me." This was like a kick to my chest. I couldn't sleep the rest of the night thinking about it. I feel like breaking up with her, even though I know I wouldn't find anyone better for a long time. What do you think?—M.P., Cambridge, Massachusetts

She did you a favor. You're not in love, not after eight weeks. You haven't seen this woman at her worst, and there's too much lust and emotion involved to accurately gauge how you feel for the long term. As we've said before, love is a process, not a revelation. If you're hoping for a relationship rather than just a romance, tell your girlfriend that you didn't mean to scare the shit out of her, if that's what you did. Whatever it's called, at this point all you know for certain is that you enjoy being with her.

I've been tempted to write in the past and am finally doing so because I've had it with the people who complain to the Advisor that their sex lives dwindle the longer they are with someone. I have three young children at home, I never get a break or vacation and I rarely sleep. I should have a headache every night and never want sex, right? Parenting magazines tell you that you won't want sex for six months after a baby is born. Friends told us the longer we were married, the less we would want sex, at least with each other. No more blow jobs, no more kinky sex on the dining room table (want to come over for dinner?), no more quickies in the laundry room on top of the drier. Where do people get these ideas? I couldn't have sex for the final five months of my last pregnancy because of problems. So five days after a vaginal birth, my husband and I were standing in the shower having the time of our lives. My doctor was not happy, but he wasn't the one not getting sex! Why do people lose sight of the fact that you have to make an effort? My husband and I sneak sex whenever we can. Our eight-year-old often can be heard telling the three-year-old, "Leave them alone, they will be done soon," because our door is locked on a Saturday morning. Maybe we can't have sessions that go all

ILLUSTRATION BY ISTVAN BANYAI

night, but we can pleasure each other as often as possible and laugh when the baby decides to cry just as the orgasm hits. Before I got married, I had an affair with a married man. He told me all the things his wife wouldn't do. I learned a lesson: I would never be the wife who wouldn't. I do get tired, but what's ten or 20 minutes in a lifetime of marriage? Those 20 minutes giving (and receiving) pleasure with my husband will make a difference—an extra 20 minutes of sleep won't. Hell, we have both fallen asleep right in the middle only to wake up an hour later and finish in that languor of blissful half-sleep. I'll get off the soapbox now. I'm just tired of listening to my husband's friends complain that their wives never give it up, while they sit in my living room instead of being home doing something about it. Besides, when they're here, I'm not getting any either. Thank you for a great column.—A.E., Temecula, California

You're welcome. Thanks for writing.

In your February issue, a reader asked about almond tequila. The correct spelling is almendrado. If you like tequila, I recommend you visit a town in the Mexican state of Jalisco called Tequila. While there, you can drink tequila at the factory, before it is transported to the bottling plant where preservatives are added. In the case of almendrado and some other tequilas, coloring is added to make the tequila appear aged, but only when the government inspectors are looking the other way. If you can't afford a trip to Tequila, try Herradura tequila. It's one of the best and its price is under its real value.—J.G., Canton, Michigan

Gracias por la corrección. Next time we're going to answer the letter first, then finish the tequila. Orendain's almendrado is again available in the U.S., though currently only at exclusive clubs and restaurants in the Los Angeles area. The importer hopes to next bring it to Arizona, Nevada and Florida. If you can find it, try it in a margarita; go soft on the sour and add a dash of orange juice, no lime, and no salt.

Are there any exercises you can do so your tongue doesn't get sore during cunnilingus?—L.S., Brooklyn, New York

We like the Lifesaver technique described by Lou Paget in her book How to Give Her Absolute Pleasure. Hold a Lifesaver in your mouth vertically between your lips and teeth. Using tiny motions, dissolve the candy with the tip of your tongue from the hole out. It takes time, patience and a nimble tongue, which builds stamina. If you need to take a breather during cunnilingus, hold your tongue against your upper lip and move your head instead. And there's no rule that says you can't put the rest of your face to work. "If your tongue gets tired, use your nose or chin to put pressure on her clitoris," Paget suggests. "Think of yourself as a yummy glazed doughnut." Placing a pillow under her hips and another under your chest can keep you from having to stretch so far.

In a column last summer, you explained tantric sex. I've also heard the term sex magic. Are they the same thing?—J.H., Cleveland, Ohio

Sex magic has been used to describe a variety of practices that merge the sexual and spiritual, including tantra. (For a woman's-eye view of tantric sex, see page 78.) One basic ritual is to create a symbol for a goal, then concentrate on that symbol during sex. At the moment you climax, say something like, "I dedicate this orgasm to finding a new job." As one manual explains it, "the power of your sexual energy becomes a vehicle for your will." Like most spiritual beliefs, sex magic is poetic yet vague and occasionally ridiculous. Then again, there's no doubt that orgasms are a powerful force of nature. Sex diva Annie Sprinkle described one of her experiences with sex magic this way: "When my house burned down, a friend sent out an e-mail suggesting people dedicate an orgasm to me. A lot of people did. The erotic prayer provided an amazing cushion. I felt so little pain." Others have taken the concept to the streets. A book called The Psychic Investor recommends sex magic to beat the market. Carve a stock ticker symbol into the side of a white candle. Focus on the symbol with your partner, then face each other, remove your clothes and build the sexual energy. Once fully aroused, begin intercourse with the man sitting and the woman on top. Delay your orgasm as long as possible. Concentrate on the stock, not her tits. Reflect on the company's impressive board of directors, its inexpensive workforce in Honduras, its promising P/E ratio. Chant. As you reach climax, envision the stock going up, up, up. The book advises that you split any profits. It takes two, after all.

What is the average number of times per week or month that a couple who has been married three years and who are 54 and 46 years old have sex? Everyone my wife asked said it was once a month. The two people I talked to guessed it was more like once a week.—P.C., Colorado Springs, Colorado

Your friends are right, or at least they're average. A survey of nearly 10,000 Americans found that most adults have sex 58 times a year, or once a week plus three holidays, two birthdays and National Sex Day (it's today). With Hef factored in, the national average is twice a day. Married people have more sex than single people, and younger have more than older. Frequency remains steady through the mid-30s, then drops 20 percent before the age of 44, an additional 25 percent before the age of 54, another 25 percent before the age of 64. From there it plummets. A survey of 65,000 male and 15,000 female PLAYBOY *readers found that most reported discontent when frequency fell below weekly. According to the survey mentioned earlier, only five percent of American adults have sex more than three times a week. It also found that 42 percent of adults engage in about 85 percent of the sex and concluded that the more sex a person has, the more likely he or she will report having a happy life and a happy marriage. They needed to interview 10,000 people to figure that out?*

What's the going rate for donating sperm?—M.H., Los Angeles, California

Hard up for cash? The standard rate is $50 a pop, and the chance to reread your favorite articles in PLAYBOY. *But it's not easy money. At California Cryobank, based in Los Angeles, donor applicants go through an elaborate screening process. Each man must meet the same public health standards as a blood donor, have a physical exam and answer numerous questions about his medical and genetic history. About half of applicants are weeded out when the sperm in the first semen sample is frozen and thawed to test its durability. Others are dropped for marketability reasons: You must be college educated and taller than 5'9". Only about five percent of the men who apply are asked to donate (technically they're paid for their time, not the sperm). Each contributes to the bank two or three times each week for six to nine months. The sperm is sold as a package deal; a woman or couple chooses an anonymous donor based on general characteristics such as educational level and race, then receives his samples until she becomes pregnant.*

My girlfriend, whom I love deeply, has been slowly gaining weight in her thighs and butt. We kid about it, but how do I tell her that maybe she should start losing weight? I don't want to hurt her feelings.—J.A., Newark, New Jersey

There are a few rules in life that should not be broken. Never wear a belt with suspenders. Never pass on a blind curve. And never, ever tell a woman she's fat, even if you're "just kidding." If you do, it won't matter whether she's thin or fat, because you won't have sex with her again. If she asks, you will say she's beautiful and that you wouldn't change a thing. If you're concerned about her weight, lead by example.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereo and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most provocative, pertinent questions will be presented in these pages each month. Write the Playboy Advisor, PLAYBOY, *680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or ad visor@playboy.com. Look for responses to our most frequently asked questions at playboy.com/faq, and check out the Advisor's latest collection of sex tricks, 365 Ways to Improve Your Sex Life, available in bookstores or by phoning 800-423-9494.*

PULLING A FAST ONE

why speed limits don't work

By JOSHUA GREEN

When Congress imposed the 55-mile-per-hour national speed limit in 1974, it was trying to conserve fuel because of an international oil crisis. Americans were to sacrifice time for the national good (adding, by one estimate, 200 million man-hours to our yearly commute). For more than a decade, we were late for work and late for *Monday Night Football* to save a meager 27 million barrels of oil, or about one half of one percent of the annual consumption. Congress, unable to persuade by fact or common sense, resorted to extortion. States that ignored the "double nickel" would lose federal highway funding. But a funny thing happened when oil prices fell in 1981: The government's rationale for speed limits suddenly shifted to safety. "Stay Alive at 55" became the mantra.

The campaign rallied around a single statistic: In the year after the 55-mph speed limit went into effect, highway deaths dropped 15 percent. But Stephen Moore, author of the report *Speed Doesn't Kill*, attributes the drop to rising gas prices. Drivers stayed home, reducing the time they spent on highways by 20 to 30 percent.

In 1987 Congress allowed states to raise the speed limit to 65 mph on portions of rural interstate highways. Safety groups were apoplectic and predicted widespread loss of life. Congress went a step further in 1995, returning jurisdiction over speed limits to the states, many of which raised their limits immediately. More dire warnings. The Department of Transportation estimated that repealing the national speed limit would add 6400 deaths to the annual toll of about 45,000. That would translate, they warned, to an additional $19 billion a year in public health costs. Ralph Nader sanctimoniously declared that "history will never forgive President Clinton and his allies in Congress for this assault on the sanctity of human life."

History won't have to forgive, because the "inevitable" never happened. Rather than soar, the highway death rate has declined nearly 12 percent since 1995. Traffic-death rates are at their lowest point ever; 1997 was the safest year in U.S. history. And the number of people killed has fallen for three straight years—despite a growing number of drivers on the road.

Simply put, reduced speed limits don't make anyone safer. The percentage of interstate drivers exceeding 65 mph more than quadrupled between 1980 and 1992. Nearly a quarter of all motorists now drive faster than 65 mph on freeways; nearly three quarters go faster than 55. A recent report by the Federal Highway Administration confirmed what drivers have known for years: Motorists set their own limits, and speed plays much less of a role in accidents than the government wants you to believe. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration studies show that increased seat belt use and reduced alcohol use are the primary reasons for falling fatality rates. And those rates began falling long before the adoption of the 55 mph limit. In 1922, about 18 people died in auto accidents for every 100 million miles traveled. By the end of World War II that number was cut in half. The fatality rate was just 3.6 in 1974. Today, there are only 1.6 deaths per 100 million miles traveled.

STEVE BOSWICK

People still die on highways, but the problem isn't the 75 mph driver. Traffic engineers discovered years ago that "speed variance"—driving at a speed that differs from the normal flow of traffic—causes an overwhelming number of accidents. Most highway fatalities occur at speeds of 45 mph or less. When speed limits are too low, drivers weave, tailgate and slam on the brakes to avoid rear-ending slower vehicles. Charles Lave, a professor at the University of California–Irvine who has studied traffic safety for 20 years, urges cops to "pay as much attention to slow drivers as they do to fast ones."

Government policy may actually have caused as many deaths as it had hoped to prevent. After raising the 55 mph speed limit, transportation officials in Utah saw a marked decline in highway fatalities because, they believe, fewer drivers were falling asleep on long rides. Before 1974, most interstates posted limits of 70 or 75 mph. That was considered safe for cars built 30 years ago; it certainly can't be considered inherently dangerous for cars equipped with air bags, antilock brakes and standard seat belts. Drivers today are more experienced, roads are built better and police diligently enforce drunk driving laws. As a result, in 1998, only one in seven speeding-related fatalities occurred on interstate highways.

Perhaps it's time to admit that the founding fathers—at least the ones who established speed limits of 75 mph—knew what they were doing.

THE INTERROGATION

the right to privacy? when it comes to divorce, forget it

By JED H. ABRAHAM

Last year, newspapers reported that former House Speaker Newt Gingrich was going through a divorce from his second wife. Gingrich was forced to answer questions about his personal conduct, particularly his sexual relationships. It seems that Newt was having an affair with a congressional aide while his comrades on the hill were trying to impeach the president for improprieties with an intern. "It's not our intention to ruin Newt," said his ex-wife's lawyer. "We're all better off if he's out there making money."

Liberal pundits had great fun with the revelation, but their glee was misplaced. Every man who goes through a divorce may face a similar interrogation. Whatever notions you may have about the right to privacy will quickly disappear during divorce proceedings.

The following are typical interrogatories one might encounter in a divorce:

- *List all persons (of the same or opposite sex) with whom you have had sexual intercourse during the past five years. Include in your answer the time(s) and place(s) of such intercourse.*
- *List all persons (of the same or opposite sex and exclusive of those mentioned in your response to the preceding interrogatory) the flesh of whose bodies you have touched (other than by way of salutation, such as by shaking hands) during the past five years. Include in your answer the time(s) and place(s) of such touching.*
- *List all persons with whom you have discussed your wife, your marriage or your children during the past five years. Include in your answer the time(s) and place(s) of such discussions and precise synopses thereof.*
- *List all personal writings and papers, such as diaries, journals, calendars and letters, that may relate to the subject matter of the preceding interrogatories. Include in your answer the precise location(s) of such writings and papers.*
- *List every fact that may tend to prove that you are, or are not, fit to have the sole or joint custody of your children.*
- *List every document that may tend to prove that you are, or are not, fit to have the sole or joint custody of your children.*
- *List all persons who may have any knowledge concerning your fitness, or your lack thereof, to have the sole or joint custody of your children. Include in your answer the current address(es) and telephone number(s) of such persons.*
- *List all medical and mental health practitioners (including practitioners of alternative forms of health care such as faith healers and card readers) you have consulted during the past five years. Include in your answer the current address(es) and telephone number(s) of such professionals.*
- *List all pharmacies that filled your medical prescriptions during the past five years. Include in your answer the current address(es) and telephone number(s) of such pharmacies.*
- *List all controlled substances (i.e., "drugs," such as cocaine, heroin and marijuana) that you have used during the past five years. Include in your answer the date(s) and place(s) of such use.*
- *List all sources of wage income you have had during the past five years. Include in your answer the name and address of each employer, your position with each, your length of employment with each, your rate of pay with each and your yearly before-tax and after-tax income with each.*
- *List all sources of nonwage income or revenue (including, but not limited to, nonwage business or professional income, capital gains, rents, royalties, barter and other in-kind exchanges, trust income, dividends, interest, gratuities, gifts, pensions, inheritances, insurance proceeds, judgments and workman's compensation) as well as lottery, gambling or other wagering winnings (and losses) you have had during the past five years. Include in your answer the date(s) and amount(s) for each source.*
- *List all personal checks you have written during the past five years. Include in your answer the drawee bank, the date, payee, amount and purpose of each check. (You may satisfactorily answer this interrogatory by supplying a legible photocopy of each such check—unaltered, front and rear—or a legible photocopy of the unaltered, original check register pertaining to each such check.)*
- *List all credit card, debit card and charge card transactions you executed during the past five years. Include in your answer the card issuer, date, payee and purpose of each transaction. (You may satisfactorily answer this interrogatory by supplying a legible photocopy of the unaltered, original monthly statement pertaining to each such transaction.)*
- *List the location of each safe deposit box held by you directly or indirectly or that you otherwise had use of during the past five years. Include in your answer the name(s) in which the box was held, the name, address and telephone number of the bank or other institution where the box was located, and the nature and contents of the box (indicating dates of placement and removal).*
- *List and describe on the attached Property Disclosure Form all property that is owned by you. For all such property claimed by you to be nonmarital, complete the detailed Nonmarital Property Tracing Schedule attached to said form.*
- *In accordance with state law, you have an affirmative duty to timely supplement any answer hereto whenever new or additional information becomes known to you.*

EVERY MAN WHO GOES THROUGH A DIVORCE MAY FACE AN INTERROGATION.

Discovery procedures such as interrogatories are among the great innovations of American law. They are designed to prevent trial by ambush. Before the trial starts, both parties have a right to dig for relevant information. The law reckons that if the parties see all the facts ahead of the

trial, they may decide to settle and save themselves the hardship of a court battle. And if they decide to go to trial anyway, then at least the trial will be conducted as openly and truthfully as possible.

In the context of discovery, "relevant information" has a broad meaning. It can mean information that itself may not be admissible at trial but might lead to other evidence that is admissible. So, for example, if it turns out that a man had sex with women other than his wife during his marriage, that may not be relevant because his wife has filed for a no-fault divorce, and she isn't claiming adultery. But her attorney could argue that if the husband had extramarital sex, or even if he just dated other women, then he undoubtedly spent some money on them, too. The wife could then claim that by spending money on other women when their marriage was in the process of breaking down, the husband dissipated marital property on nonfamily matters and should be held accountable for that. The irrelevant facts of having sex or socializing thus lead to the relevant facts of dissipating marital property.

DAVE GORDON

If the husband's lawyer asks the wife the same kinds of questions, and she objects, her objection may carry more weight than the husband's. If she had sex or socialized with other men, it is likely that the men spent money on her rather than the other way around. So the husband can't pin the dissipation rationale on her. He can't even argue that the money the men spent on her was income earned during the marriage and thus marital property in which both should share. Unless the wife explicitly charged the men to go out with her, a court would undoubtedly rule that the money was in the nature of a gift to her and, therefore, not marital property. The husband's lawyer could only argue that her sleeping around diminished her moral fitness to be a custodian of her children, but courts don't buy this kind of thinking anymore.

As to the questions about medical history: One's medical records and conversations with doctors normally are confidential. But in a custody case one's physical fitness as a parent is at issue, so the law removes the privilege of confidentiality. If the other side can convince the court that the medical information it is seeking is reasonably related to the issue of fitness as a custodian, it will be able to get it.

Paradoxically, even though mental fitness as a parent is also at issue in a custody case, that's generally not enough for the law to remove the privilege of confidentiality. The law does not want to discourage people from confiding in their therapists, so it tends to afford a higher protection to psychological confidences than to medical confidences. But if either spouse testifies about his or her mental fitness, the witness waives this privilege. The other side can ask the court to release the mental health records.

As to taking the Fifth during discovery, it's not always a good idea. The Fifth Amendment was designed to protect individuals accused of a crime. You can't be expected to testify against (or incriminate) yourself. But in a divorce case, a spouse will not be allowed to claim that he or she is fit to have custody and then hide behind the Fifth when asked to prove it. Taking the Fifth can be held against you in custody and property matters.

It used to be, under the common law, that husbands and wives were absolutely prohibited from testifying for or against each other. The law protected the marital relationship as privileged and confidential. It considered the sanctity of marriage and "domestic tranquility" to be more important than the court's need for tattle at trial. That privilege has been whittled down, especially in divorce.

A spouse undergoing a custody deposition must answer face-to-face questions. Of course, one could be obstinate and refuse to answer anything. But, in return, the court can sanction the spouse and even strike the reluctant party's petition. The trade-off: Lose one's dignity or lose one's children.

A good lawyer will prepare a father for the deposition by running him through some of the questions he may hear. But he might not ask about the children's teachers, favorite foods and friends—and the wife's lawyer will, suspecting even a capable father won't know them all. When the opposing lawyer asks the questions again at trial, he can show that the father only first learned them after the deposition. That won't look good.

In some cases, a spouse might take the children to a specialist who finds "evidence of abuse." Even if such charges don't pan out, a shadow has been cast. It's a tricky balancing act for a judge, and that touch of doubt may tip the scale.

There are, however, some ways to avoid the inquisition. Mediation. Settlement. The wife may suggest that in exchange for sole custody, title to the house, 50 percent of the remainder of marital property, permanent alimony, child support at the statutory guideline rate (plus dollar-for-dollar add-ons for day care, medical coverage and miscellaneous expenses such as camps and schools), she might just agree to settle the case.

The only other ways to avoid the inquisition are to remain happily married or to never marry at all.

Abraham practices family law and is the author of From Courtship to Courtroom: What Divorce Law Is Doing to Marriage.

READER

ROAD RIGHTS

I read Joshua Green's "Road Rights" (*The Playboy Forum*, February) with great interest. My wife and I were recently pulled over by Utah state troopers near the Nevada border on Interstate 80 east. My crime, apparently, was operating a motor vehicle. A trooper brusquely inquired where I was coming from, where I was going and whether I owned the car I was driving. He ordered me to produce my license, registration and insurance. He didn't tell me it was a routine traffic stop to check people's papers. I had assumed there had been a bank robbery or a prison escape.

There were approximately 100 troopers on the roadside, and I'm sure they caught a few wrongdoers. But their conduct was appalling and left me feeling angry and hurt. I was raised to believe that if you do right in this country the authorities will leave you alone.

I have driven for 24 years without an accident or a ticket. I served six years in the Navy. I have held a job since I was 12 years old. Yet on this day, I was treated with mistrust and suspicion. The trooper's tone of voice made clear what was running through his mind: We know you're doing something wrong—everyone does—and if we look long enough we'll find it.

Unlike some of the people Green described, I wasn't asked to unlock my trunk. That is fortunate, because I would have refused and was prepared to go to jail over a warrantless search. I have little doubt, given the officer's conduct, that he would have gladly cuffed me and hauled me off.

I used to have a great deal of respect for people who chose law enforcement as a profession. However, from now on I'll view them with the same suspicion as they view me with.

David Olson
Sheridan, Wyoming

My first impulse upon finishing "Road Rights" was to wonder whether Green is a lawyer. The article suggests that it was the law enforcement officers who invented the probable cause used to search those vehicles and people. Was Green there for the searches? Common sense tells me that if an officer smells marijuana while conducting a traffic stop, then marijuana is in the vehicle. Why does Green feel the need to provide ammo for junkies and dopers? Law enforcement officers risk their lives every day while attempting to curb illegal drug use. We have a hard enough time arresting and prosecuting criminals without jailhouse lawyers like Green adding his two cents to the debate. Honest people do not have to worry about having their vehicles searched or being arrested for narcotics possession. In the meantime, I hope PLAYBOY is happy knowing that it is helping to destroy our country.

Michael Challis
Wichita Falls, Texas

"Road Rights" should have been subtitled "How to protect yourself when you're pulled over and know you're guilty." I've defended more than my share of traffic scofflaws. But I'm tired of reading advice on how to avoid even greater charges. In each of the cases cited by Green, the victim of the police search was, in fact, in violation of one or more rules other than traffic laws. Unlike Green, I think the best way to protect yourself if you're pulled over by a police officer is to make sure you're not committing any other crimes while driving your car.

Bill Adair
Humble, Texas

I know from experience that police often use driver stops as fishing expeditions, hoping to turn up evidence of a crime without any indication one has occurred. One night last October, I was pulled over by the California Highway Patrol because of an outdated vehicle registration sticker. The two patrolmen asked if I'd had anything to drink that evening. I replied truthfully that I had drunk one glass of wine more than two hours earlier. Although I was definitely not intoxicated, they tested my breath. When I called the CHP the next morning, they confirmed that my outdated sticker was the only reason they had stopped me.

I thought that the unnecessary sobriety test was degrading and humiliating. But even more outrageous was this question asked by one of the officers: "Have you used any illegal drugs—ever?" That's none of their business.

I was not arrested or cited for any wrongdoing as a result of this stop, but the experience has been a source of lingering anger. It has eroded my respect for law enforcement.

The ACLU "bust card" that Green recommends at the end of his article is indeed helpful. But I would like to know when police can require a sobriety test and under what circumstances they are likely to do so. I wonder if I might have been better off by telling them I'd had nothing to drink at all.

Brian Sorgatz
Sacramento, California

You should never lie to a cop, but you also should never tell them anything that's self-incriminating. Just as any stranger on the street can blurt out a question, a police officer can ask you anything he or she wants, no

FOR THE RECORD

MISO HORNY

"Displays of 16 Ordinary Women Showing Their Pubic Hair."

"First-Time Photos of Former Models With Beautiful Bosoms."

—Advertisements for Japanese skin magazines that at least one of the country's major newspapers banned following complaints that the ads "encouraged sexual harassment."

FORUM RESPONSE

matter how irrelevant it may seem. However, you don't have to answer. That's your Fifth Amendment right. You were in a tough situation. While police can't administer sobriety tests indiscriminately, you gave them cause when you told them you drank a glass of wine. The question about drug use sounds like a clumsy attempt to expand this cause in hopes of searching your car. You were wise not to refuse the sobriety test. As a condition of receiving a California driver's license, citizens essentially sign away their Fourth Amendment right to refuse a sobriety test. In California and other states, state law allows police to force drivers they suspect of drunk driving to take a sobriety test under the threat of arrest.

YOUR MILLENNIUM FIX

Finally, someone gets it right! James R. Petersen's article "My Millennium Fix" (*The Playboy Forum*, January) echoes my sentiments exactly. Petersen applies common sense, fairness and rationality to every point raised. If more people thought as he does, there would be much less wrong with the world. January's *Forum* should be required reading for all junior high and high school students.

Pennie McCart
Seattle, Washington

It is downright scary to find myself agreeing with every word of a magazine article. Mr. Petersen, when are you running for president?

Inge Berge
Gloucester, Massachusetts

WHITEWASH QUEEN

Thank you for pointing out some of Janet Reno's nonaccomplishments ("Whitewash Queen," *The Playboy Forum*, February). Of course, we should have expected such obvious misdeeds from someone appointed by Bill Clinton. James Bovard's first two items alone demonstrate how screwed up everything has become during Reno's tenure as attorney general. She repeatedly denied that incendiary devices were used at Waco until it was proved otherwise beyond a doubt. Although Reno was not the attorney general when the Ruby Ridge standoff took place, she was responsible for hearing the cases that followed. It is astounding that not one government agent involved in the shooting—not even the sniper who killed Vicki Weaver—was charged with a crime, even though the Weaver family was given a $3.1 million settlement. Reno has performed poorly at best when it comes to protecting the citizens of this country and enforcing justice for all. The evidence is all around us.

Michael Jones
Ridgeland, Mississippi

WASHINGTON'S DANGLING ORBS

If educators in Georgia are fearful that George Washington's pocket watch in *Washington Crossing the Delaware* will be mistaken for his testicles ("Forum F.Y.I.," February), the next thing you know they'll be censoring Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* because of her cleavage.

Wes Pierce
Orlando, Florida

We would like to hear your point of view. Send questions, opinions and quirky stuff to: The Playboy Forum Reader Response, PLAYBOY, *680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Please include a daytime phone number. Fax number: 312-951-2939. E-mail: forum@playboy.com (please include your city and state).*

FORUM F.Y.I.

SCORE!

U.S. women's soccer team fullback Brandi Chastain kicked off an international trend when she posed for *Gear* magazine wearing only a soccer ball and cleats. To raise funding for their teams, several top U.S. female track-and-field stars posed nude for a "Millennium Calendar of Champions." The New Zealand women's rowing team posed with strategically placed oars for its own pin-up calendar. Now the Australian women's soccer team has scored with a sexy calendar. The Matildas, as they're known at home, planned to print 5000 copies but ultimately had to print more than 45,000 to meet demand. For more information on the new fashion in football, point your web browser to www.worldfootball.com.au/matildas. The Matildas win our World Cup of calendars.

YOU'VE GOT MAIL

and oh, by the way, you're fired

By JOSHUA GREEN

You've seen them. Hell, you've even passed them along to buddies and co-workers: humorous e-mail with titles such as 25 Reasons Why Beer Is Better Than Women.

Beer doesn't demand equality.
A frigid beer is a good beer.

For the opposite sex, there are Ten Reasons Cucumbers Are Better Than Men, followed by Why Beer Is Better Than Cucumbers. Electronic mail has taken the place of the watercooler. Heard a good one lately? Pass it around. Or add your own. Relieve some stress. Share a chuckle.

But some people, however, aren't laughing. In 1995, four women who worked for Chevron received messages they considered offensive, including the infamous odes to beer mentioned previously. They printed out the e-mail, hired lawyers and slapped the company with a sexual harassment suit. The women said the e-mail contributed to a hostile environment. Rather than go to trial, Chevron agreed to pay the women $2.2 million, as well as court and legal fees.

That same year, a woman who worked for Microsoft sued the company for sexual discrimination, claiming she had not been promoted because of her gender. She argued that the company had created an environment hostile toward women. Among her evidence: e-mail distributed by colleagues on topics such as "mouse balls," a proposed sex holiday in Finland and a parody titled a Girl's Guide to Condoms. A judge sided with the woman, ruling that the messages could be used as evidence to argue that Microsoft does discriminate.

In 1996, the Principal Financial Group insurance company dismissed a customer service representative because she had forwarded to colleagues e-mail messages with titles such as A Few Good Reasons Cookie Dough Is Better Than Men and Ten Reasons Why Trick-or-Treating Is Better Than Sex. The woman took the company to court, arguing that she had been dismissed unfairly. Her employer responded that she had violated e-mail and sexual harassment policies, and that it had the evidence in hand. A judge ruled that the company had not proved that employees who received the e-mail felt harassed. He also ruled that the company had not adequately warned the woman that sending personal e-mail on her work computer could get her fired. However, Principal was not ordered to rehire the woman, nor to pay her. The bottom line: She lost her job.

> In cyberspace, your boss has the right to act like Big Brother. Once your fingers touch the keyboard, your expectation of privacy disappears.

One survey of visitors to an online careers site found that 90 percent of those with access to computers at work had visited at least one website last year that couldn't be justified as helping them do their jobs (the other ten percent are lying, or they're the sort of culturally numb automatons George Orwell envisioned). According to the same survey, 84 percent of American workers with computers have sent or received personal e-mail on the job. A report last year by an Internet filtering firm estimated that about one third of the time an employee spends online at work is for recreation. The survey did not indicate how much "recreational" time these employees spent chatting with co-workers before the age of computers, or how many have made personal phone calls related to raising a family or conducting the business of life.

Many companies fear the Internet. It creates costly lawsuits. So they have turned to surveillance to protect the bottom line. Forty-five percent of the companies that responded to an American Management Association survey admitted that they monitor phone calls, check computer files and read incoming and outgoing e-mail messages. A survey of 200 human resources managers found that one in three had fired someone for misuse of online resources. In all, an estimated 40 million Americans are working under some type of surveillance.

In November, the New York Times Co. fired 23 workers from its central processing center in Norfolk, Virginia for distributing pornographic images and jokes via e-mail. An anonymous tipster prompted the bloodletting. That same month, the Navy disciplined more than 500 people at a supply depot in Pennsylvania for exchanging racy cartoons, photos and jokes. In October, Xerox fired 40 people for visiting online casinos, sex sites, eBay and E-trade. But those who kept their jobs aren't necessarily breathing a sigh of relief. The company routinely monitors the web use of each of its 92,000 employees.

In the years since Anita Hill accused Clarence Thomas of boorish behavior, the courts have rewritten laws that govern the workplace to clamp down on any discussion of sex that could be construed as harassment. That discussion

now includes both e-mail messages and websites.

The laws against sex discrimination originally sought to prohibit the quid pro quo demand that a person sleep with his or her boss or lose the job. But the government also targeted something it called a "hostile sexual environment"—workplace behavior that is sexual in nature and judged to be unreasonable, pervasive and unwelcome to at least one person.

The concept is vague, and the courts faced many challenges deciding what would be acceptable. One shipyard worker cried foul when her co-workers taped images from *Hustler* to her locker. A paralegal told of a lawyer who cornered her in the copier room and poured M&Ms down her blouse. A jury found a man liable for millions because he described an episode of *Seinfeld* to a female co-worker. Many cases boiled down to he said–she said confrontations, impossible to prove.

E-mail has rewritten the rules of evidence. It is a permanent record of casual remarks, sometimes without the context of a smile or laugh (thus the e-mail convention of emoticons). In many of the cases involving electronic wrongdoing—Microsoft's antitrust case being the most prominent—employers' internal e-mail records have provided legal evidence against them. When sexual harassment is involved, the courts have ruled that an off-color joke distributed by e-mail can contribute to a hostile environment. At many companies, the simple click of a button forwards a message to thousands of people, only one of whom need be outraged. Deleting messages doesn't mean that they go away; they're still in the system, and are still accessible to employers.

Even without an actual complaint, a company that actively punishes mischievous e-mailers creates a persuasive defense against future acts of harassment. That's why the body count is so high, and why surveillance software sells so well.

Most of the cases mentioned here involve sexual content. But the judicial panic about racy Internet images obscures a deeper issue: How and when does the right to privacy disappear from our daily work life? Courts have recognized a worker's right to privacy in cases that don't involve online access: Employers generally can't search desks, listen surreptitiously to voice mail, install hidden video cameras or rifle through personal belongings. The federal wiretap law forbids an employer from listening to a personal phone conversation unless it is done for business reasons and the employee has been notified that his conversations will be monitored (if the employer realizes it's a personal call, he is legally required to end the monitoring).

Computers are a different matter. Since the company owns the machines, the courts reason, it has the right to view anything stored on them, particularly if it has told employees not to use them for personal e-mail or surfing. In the court's view, you give up the expectation of privacy as soon as you log on. In cyberspace, your boss has every right to act like Big Brother.

Zero-tolerance e-mail policies offer employers a quick solution to a thorny legal problem. Companies can protect themselves by installing inexpensive filtering and monitoring software. The technology originally was developed to help parents, teachers and librarians monitor the surfing and e-mail habits of kids by blocking porn sites and flagging messages that contain "adult" words. Workplace programs such as Mimesweeper, LittleBrother and Cameo can be unbelievably thorough: Cameo, which can be operated from a desktop computer, checks the text and subject lines of all incoming and outgoing e-mail messages for any of 60 keywords specified by the employer. When a match is found, the message, including attachments, is copied and forwarded to a designated administrator for review. The sender and recipient don't even realize they're being watched.

Employer eavesdropping isn't limited to e-mail messages. A product called Spector takes surreptitious digital screenshots every few seconds of whatever happens to be on an employee's monitor. The manufacturer boasts that it's very much like a surveillance camera. Another program captures every stroke of a keyboard. Employers also can run "drill down" procedures that produce a list of each website an employee visits.

That means even a brief visit to a website deemed unacceptable can become grounds for dismissal. Once you've sent personal e-mail or peeked at eBay, even for a moment, you're at the mercy of your employer, who can dredge up any "violation." About 40 percent of American companies use this type of software; it's how Xerox ferreted out the company's 40 offenders.

Surfers who make a point of steering clear of X-rated sites shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that their employer's watchful eye is limited to evidence of sexual harassment. If you use your computer to find health information on your lunch break, to e-mail the pharmacy to fill a prescription, to send your lawyer a note about your divorce or to take a look at a job site to find out what you should be getting paid, your boss can know about it as soon as you do. Once your fingers touch the keyboard, your expectation of privacy disappears.

As an information-technology manager recently told *The Wall Street Journal*, "You live in a democracy, you don't work in one."

NEWSFRONT

what's happening in the sexual and social arenas

CHEAP THRILLS

EATONTON, GEORGIA—*Police charged a 17-year-old with breaking into weekend and summer homes to eat junk food, watch pay-per-view porn and call phone*

sex lines. "In one house, he unwrapped presents and hooked up a computer," a detective said. "He got a TV out of a box and hooked it up. He ate sardines and potato chips." Police suspect the teen broke into one house four times, another house twice and a third house once.

SOBER DEFENSE

PORTLAND, OREGON—*The officer who pulled him over says Robert Buskirk Jr. seemed to be drunk: bloodshot eyes, alcohol on the breath, slurred speech. After being taken to the station for questioning, Buskirk waived his Miranda rights. In court, Buskirk's lawyer argued that if his client had been drunk, he couldn't have made a "knowing, intelligent and voluntary waiver of his rights." For that reason, anything he said to the officer after his arrest, including his refusal to take a breath test, should not be allowed as evidence. The judge agreed, and the jury acquitted.*

WATCH YOUR MOUTH

FORT WORTH, TEXAS—*School trustees suspended an elementary school counselor for 20 days without pay because he said, "Hello, good-looking" to a woman in the school office. "To me, that's a compliment," the counselor explained. The woman was at the school to conduct sexual harassment workshops. Following her complaint, the school placed the counselor on paid leave for more than a month until the school trustees voted to suspend him.*

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

PHILADELPHIA—*A Quaker school expelled a student because he claimed in a chat on America Online that "stupid people should be banished or killed or enslaved or something." The student added, "We kill off chickens and cows so that we can eat them and survive; it's the same thing." The comments were not made while the student was at school or using a school computer. Nevertheless, the headmaster said the remarks went against the school's "basic values."*

WAUSAU, WISCONSIN—*A judge upheld the suspension of a student who demonstrated a vengeful imagination. When the eighth grader disrupted an English class, the teacher told him to go into the hall to complete his assignment. He returned with a story of an angry student who cuts off his teacher's head. The school suspended him for a year.*

BLACK CREDIT

DALLAS, TEXAS—*In 1993 Essence magazine encouraged the descendants of slaves to claim their "40 acres and a mule, plus interest" as a onetime tax credit. It suggested the figure $43,209, which had been calculated as the difference at the time between the median net worth of black and white households. At least 21,000 black Americans filed for relief. The IRS ignored most claims, but Willie Foster, a part-time Baptist minister, received a check for $30,085.90—the credit minus what he owed for child support and student loans. The IRS says it told Foster the check had been a clerical error. Nevertheless, Foster encouraged three friends to file similar claims. This past year, a federal judge sentenced him to three two-year prison terms. The prosecutor called him "a plague to good, honest people who want to pay their taxes."*

UNDERDEVELOPED

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN—*College student Patrick Corp and his 17-year-old girlfriend decided to take photos of themselves having sex. When Corp took the film to be developed, the lab alerted authorities. Under state law, the girl was old enough to have sex with Corp, who was 24. But under federal law, she could not consent to the photos. Corp pleaded guilty to possessing child pornography created with materials carried over state lines (the paper used to print the photos had been manufactured outside Michigan). He faces up to five years in prison. Although there was no evidence that Corp planned to distribute the photos, the prosecutor said he pursued the case to protect "the interests of society. If they get circulated, it could damage other children by feeding this appetite."*

SEX SCAN

GRONINGEN, THE NETHERLANDS—*In an attempt to better understand the physiology of sex, a university hospital asked eight couples to have intercourse and three women to masturbate inside its magnetic resonance imaging scanner. Among other findings, the images showed that in the missionary position the penis has the shape of a boomerang, almost parallel to the woman's spine. (Leonardo da Vinci, among other great thinkers over the centuries, suggested that the penis remained relatively straight during sex.) The researchers also found that, despite beliefs to*

the contrary, the size of the uterus does not increase during arousal. Meanwhile, Pfizer, the drug company that makes Viagra, has used MRI scanning to measure blood flow in the genitals of women watching erotic videos.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KEVIN POPE

At seventeen,
Don Julio Gonzalez bought his first set of drums.
For nearly sixty years. Don Julio has been perfecting his tequila,
allowing it to mature quietly in old oak casks until a delicate wood flavor,
exquisite aroma and light, amber color are imparted.
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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: PETE ROSE

a candid conversation with charlie hustle about the gambling controversy that won't die, where baseball's gone wrong and why hillary clinton is one sexy babe

Pete Rose was a line drive–hitting, head-first-sliding Cincinnati Reds rookie in 1963, when the team's veterans hung the derisive nickname Charlie Hustle on his cocky crew-cut head. He has been pissing off people ever since. Every fan knows Rose's claim to fame: 4256 base hits, 67 more than Ty Cobb had. But even nonfans know his claim to shame: the charge that he bet on baseball games while managing the Reds. That's what keeps Rose out of the Hall of Fame and keeps him hustling to defend his name even as he sells it to anybody willing to ante up and get in line: Get your red-hot autographed bats, balls, cards, caps, jerseys and posters!

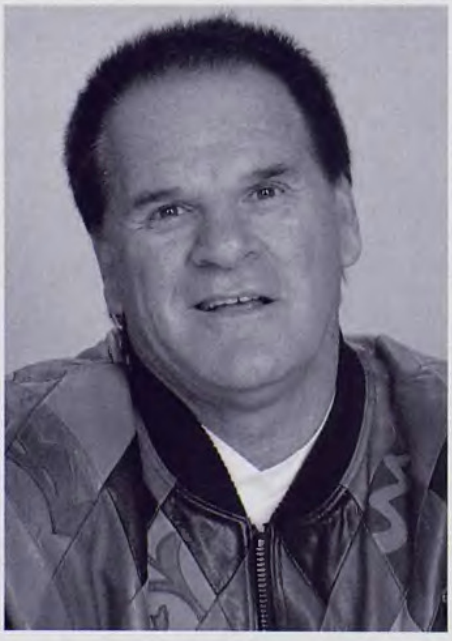
Rose's enemies include baseball commissioner Bud Selig, former commissioner Fay Vincent and baseball inquisitors John Dowd (the lawyer whose report on Rose's gambling helped get the Hit King exiled in 1989) and Jim Gray, whose World Series Rose-grilling made headlines ten years later. But if his shit list is long, it's a Post-it note compared with the roster of Rose fans who flock to his autograph signings or add their names to the cyberscroll at sportcut.com, the website that set an Internet record for hits for a sports site on the day Rose's Hall of Fame petition appeared there. "One thing about Pete," says an old National League rival who once duked it out with him, "he's overcome his shyness."

The son of a bank clerk who played semipro football, Rose won the 1963 National League Rookie of the Year award and went on to win back-to-back batting titles in 1968 and 1969. In 1973 he hit .338 and was the league's most valuable player. Next came World Series titles for Cincinnati's Big Red Machine in 1975 (when Rose was Series MVP) and 1976. Through it all, baseball's player of the decade for the Seventies tooted his horn like Miles Davis. You don't have to look up Rose's numbers—just ask him and he'll spew: 16-time All-Star who set an NL record with a 44-game hitting streak in 1978, signed the next year with Philadelphia for $800,000, the highest salary in the game, and hit .331. He retired in 1986 with a .303 career average, 2165 runs scored (fourth-highest in baseball history), 746 doubles (second) and 11 major league batting records, including hits, games and, tellingly, most games in which his team won.

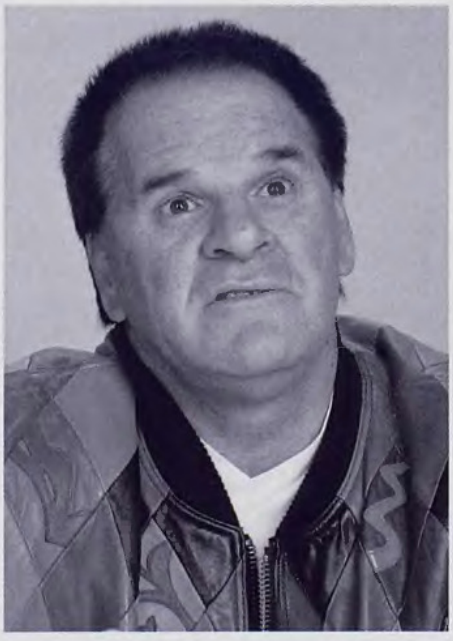
There are no official records for bets placed, expletives uttered or Baseball Annies nailed.

Vulgar? Fifty-nine-year-old Rose favors gold chains and sweatpants with mesh pockets, the better to show off the fist-sized wad of bills he carries around. Before a radio appearance with Howard Stern (a man he calls a "fucking genius"), he sat in Stern's waiting room and mused about "all the tits that have been in here." You can call Rose crass or an ass and you'll get little argument from the lords of baseball, who cringe at publicity stunts like his annual autograph-hustling event at Cooperstown on Hall of Fame weekend. But, vulgar or not, you're talking about one of the toughest, winningest SOBs in sports, an overgrown Little Leaguer who parlayed sharp eyes, steel-cable wrists and the sheer cussedness of ten mean drunks into a record that may stand forever. Last winter, when stats guru Bill James crunched the numbers and estimated all active players' chances to catch Rose, every major leaguer wound up with the same chance—zero—except the Yankees' Derek Jeter, who James figures has a one percent shot at surpassing the Hit King.

Number 14 was a showboat, but he was also baseball's number one gamer. When he bowled over Indians catcher Ray Fosse in the 1970 All-Star game, effectively ending



"Is having a plaque on a wall in Cooperstown going to make me a couple of million dollars a year? I want to get back on the field. I'm the best ambassador baseball has, and I can't step on a big-league field."



"I've got a 15-year-old son and a ten-year-old daughter, and if they were going to do one of the following things—be an alcoholic, be a drug offender, beat their wife or their husband, or gamble—I hope they would gamble."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ROSE

"How could I not be in the top 50 of ESPN's Greatest Athletes of the Century? Mark Spitz? That guy worked two weeks! I worked 24 years. They say I was just a singles hitter, but I'm sixth in history for total bases."

Fosse's career and leaving him with arm and shoulder pain that has dogged him for 30 years, there was one good reason. It won the game. After signing with the underachieving Phillies in 1979, he helped lead them to the World Series. Never was Rose's nose for the spotlight more evident than in the last game of that 1980 Series, when Phils catcher Bob Boone let a pop foul frog-hop out of his mitt, only to watch first baseman Rose snatch it and squeeze it, killing the Royals.

Such men can't retire. They need action, competition. From 1984 to 1989 Rose managed the Reds, and he gambled. On football, he says. On baseball, lawyer Dowd and commissioner Bart Giamatti said. In 1989 Rose signed his own death warrant, a lifetime suspension that states, "Nothing in this agreement shall be deemed either an admission or a denial by Peter Edward Rose of the allegation that he bet on any major league baseball game." He remained eligible for the Hall of Fame, but in 1991—the year before he would be eligible for induction—the Hall's directors passed a new rule: Suspended players were no longer allowed. Rose felt double-crossed, and he charges baseball with "brainwashing" the public about him. "Admit I bet on baseball?" he says. "Forget it."

The fans are on his side. They voted Rose onto baseball's All-Century Team, giving him the last outfield spot over Roberto Clemente and giving Selig a PR headache. That led to Jim Gray's televised grilling of Rose, which backfired on Gray and made Rose more popular than ever. Even Bill Clinton called on baseball to let Pete back in, saying, "I'd like to see it worked out. God knows he's paid a price." Soon Rose, class act that he is, lamented that he and the president had both suffered horribly in recent years—along with O.J. Simpson. Selig was unmoved, announcing in February that "there is not a scintilla of give" in baseball's hardline position.

Who is Pete Rose? As his lawyers huddled with baseball's lawyers to hash out his fate, we sent writer **Mark Ribowsky** *to meet the Hit King in New York and Florida. Ribowsky's report follows:*

"Rose opened the door to his hotel room, clad in a natty gray sports jacket and tan slacks, a little piece of toilet paper stuck to a shaving cut on his chin. His agent, Warren Greene, a man who looks both cuddly and beleaguered, tended to the cut before we piled into a limousine for the short drive to Michael Jordan's restaurant in Grand Central Station, where Rose met with investors of sportcut.com.

"In the limo he wondered about the point spread in that day's Monday Night Football game. Later, after two hours of mingling with businessmen, his mind was on the models who had been hired to stand around in polo shirts and tight pants. 'I liked the one with the big Jewish ass,' he said.

"What makes him tick? Pride, anger, sex, self-righteousness, money, money and money. We began with a topic I was sure he'd enjoy."

PLAYBOY: The long, loud ovation you got when you were introduced as a member of the All-Century Team—was that as good as sex?

ROSE: Playing baseball is as good as sex. The sixth game of the 1975 World Series against Boston was like sex. It don't get better than that. But this was close—getting a bigger ovation than Hank Aaron in Atlanta is like outdoing God in heaven. When Hank told me, "Hey, you got a bigger hand than me," I said, "Hank, you throw out the first ball here once a month. They're tired of seeing you." Imagine what it would have been like if that game was in Cincinnati. They would have clapped for 15 minutes.

PLAYBOY: Did Commissioner Bud Selig say anything to you that night?

ROSE: I thanked him for letting me be part of the celebration, and he said, "It's a great pleasure to have you with us." He told my son Tyler that he was always a fan of Pete Rose. So there's nothing personal there. I don't dislike Bud Selig. I didn't dislike Bart Giamatti. I got along with Giamatti, and I think that if Bart was still around I'd be reinstated, because he was a fair man.

Ty Cobb and Tris Speaker are in the Hall of Fame and they were known gamblers. Leo Durocher associated with known gamblers and he's in the Hall.

PLAYBOY: Are you still mad at NBC's Jim Gray for his interview that night?

ROSE: Jim Gray is a liar. He told Mike Schmidt to tell me that if I did that interview, it would get me into the Hall of Fame. So Mike tells me, "He says he has inside information from the commissioner's office that will help you."

PLAYBOY: But all Gray did was press you to admit you had bet on baseball.

ROSE: It's not like I haven't been asked those questions hundreds of times, but he was too persistent about it. It's been ten years, Jim, let it go. Let a guy enjoy the All-Century Team. But he attacked, and to make it worse, the next day he told the press I knew he was going to talk about gambling. That's a lie, and when he said I wasn't mad at him when it was over, that's another fucking lie, and he knows it. After the interview I looked at him and said, "You fucking treat a friend like that? How in the fuck can you say I'm a friend?" and walked away. He was stunned by that. Then Craig Sager, the other on-field reporter for NBC, comes over and he has tears in his eyes. He says, "Pete, I've got to apologize for my profession. That was the worst thing I've ever heard, and I couldn't work the rest of the night if I didn't get this off my chest."

PLAYBOY: Sager denies saying any such thing.

ROSE: Maybe he's scared for his job. That makes me think, Craig, why can't you be a man about it? I mean, nobody's going to fire Craig Sager because he knew Jim Gray was a disgrace.

PLAYBOY: Any advice for Gray?

ROSE: Forget the goddamn attitude and just do the job.

PLAYBOY: Suppose Selig continues your suspension but offers to make you eligible for the Hall of Fame. Would you agree to that?

ROSE: Baseball would be committing suicide to do that. Going into the Hall of Fame is not going to let me make a living. I'm not knocking the Hall of Fame—my kids would think that's the greatest thing in the world, because after ten years they'd see their daddy for what he was, a great ballplayer. All they've heard their whole lives is what a louse I am. But is having a plaque on a wall in Cooperstown going to make me a couple of million dollars a year? I'm a baseball person, a baseball teacher. I want to get back on the field. I'm the best ambassador baseball has, and I can't step on a big-league field.

PLAYBOY: But you clear more than $1 million a year from memorabilia shows and the like. How can you moan about money?

ROSE: I'm not moaning. I can't moan and whine and be bitter and say baseball fucked me and created all my problems, because I'm the one who called the bookmakers and made the bets. I wrote the checks to the bookmakers. But the fact that I make good now is irrelevant. I never see my family. I'm always on an airplane going somewhere.

PLAYBOY: Still hustling. You make frequent appearances at casinos. Given that you were suspended for gambling, isn't that inappropriate?

ROSE: Are you telling me to starve? Why should I stay away from casinos? Bart Giamatti told me to go and "reconfigure" my life, and I've done that. I don't hang around with them sleazeballs no more. Yes, I still go to the track. I enjoy it and it's legal. I go to casinos, but I don't gamble in them. Hell, even if I did play blackjack or roulette, which I don't, I wasn't suspended for playing blackjack, was I? I can see where people would be disturbed if I walked into a sports book in a Las Vegas casino and started making bets. But do I do that? Never. Last October I went to Atlantic City to be in a show with all the living players who have 3000 hits, and people said, "How can you do a show in Atlantic City?" What the hell was I supposed to do, stiff Hank Aaron and Willie Mays and all the guys in the 3000-hit club who

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were there? How can you have a fucking 3000-hit show if the Hit King ain't there?

Why are people alarmed if I go to Atlantic City? Because it looks bad? Tell me this: Did it look bad that a couple of the 3000-hit guys were drunk and playing blackjack the night before that show? Nobody ever sees me loaded. I don't drink or smoke. And if I look bad going to casinos, why do major league ballparks have casino signs all over the place? But I'll make you a deal: If baseball doesn't want me in that environment, give me a fucking job in baseball. Until then, I have a family to support.

PLAYBOY: Pure baseball question: Which team would win a Series between the 1975–1976 Red Machine and the 1998–1999 Yankees?

ROSE: How many guys on the Yankees are going to the Hall of Fame? Bernie Williams, Derek Jeter? Who else? Nobody. How many are in the Hall of Fame from the Big Red Machine? Morgan, Perez, Bench. I belong. And if guys like Pee Wee Reese start making it at shortstop, what about Dave Concepcion? If you gave our team the Yankees' pitching staff, we'd have won 135 games a year. But then, give the Yankees our starting lineup and they'd win 135. The real difference is in the competition. The game's good now, but it's weaker. The pitching is terrible. Most teams have a good stopper because you only have to develop one guy. But where are the middle relievers? Look closely and you'll see that it's the middle innings when most of the runs are scored. How many teams have a good guy leading up to the stopper? Not even the Yankees. It's because pitchers aren't pitchers anymore; they're $35 million investments.

These days, if a pitcher gets a kink in his elbow, they're not going to let him throw a fucking pitch until they find out what it is. So nobody throws hard anymore. We used to go into Houston and see Larry Dierker, Don Wilson, Jim Ray and Dick Farrell, and all of them threw 92 or 93 miles an hour. We'd go to Los Angeles and face Koufax, Drysdale, Bill Singer, Don Sutton. In San Francisco it was Billy Pierce, Gaylord Perry, Jack Sanford, Bob Bolin. All blowers. Now there's maybe two hard throwers on a staff. The rest throw screwballs or palmballs or forkballs. I could take a bat up there today and rock them guys. I could have rocked the old-timers, too. They say Walter Johnson and Christy Mathewson pitched both ends of doubleheaders. Well, I used to excel in the seventh or eighth inning, when the pitcher was tired. That's why you can't compare me to Ty Cobb. Would Cobb have had a .367 lifetime batting average if he came up in 1963 and played till 1986? That guy never faced a relief pitcher.

PLAYBOY: Do you get all the credit you deserve?

ROSE: I played more games than anybody and got more hits. Yet all I hear is that Rickey Henderson is the greatest leadoff hitter ever. Why? Because he hits home runs? I got over 1300 RBI. Check Rickey Henderson's RBI, see how many he's got. [Editor's note: The answer is 1020 through 1999.]

How could I not be in the top 50 of ESPN's Greatest Athletes of the Century? Mark Spitz? That guy worked two weeks! I worked 24 years. They say I was just a singles hitter, but I'm sixth in history for total bases.

PLAYBOY: Quick—describe the Eric Show pitch you hit to set the record.

ROSE: Fastball, down and in.

PLAYBOY: Who was the best pitcher you faced?

ROSE: Juan Marichal. Bob Gibson was the toughest competitor. Koufax was the hardest thrower. Think of all the Hall of Famers I faced. I got 77 hits off Phil Niekro and 30 against his brother Joe—I got one forty-second of all my hits against one family! I had a five-for-five against Warren Spahn, a five-for-five off Phil Niekro and a five-for-five off Gaylord Perry. That's 15-for-15 off three Hall of Famers.

PLAYBOY: Did Perry load it up on you?

ROSE: Sure. Four out of my five hits in that game were off spitballs. There's a guy who cheated for 20 years, and he's in the Hall. Other guys loaded it up, too. Sutton cut the ball, and I'll tell you, when I watch Greg Maddux' ball move, that's not normal. Kevin Brown's ball movement isn't normal. It looks like they're doing something to the ball, but I'm not saying they're cheaters. I never say someone's cheating unless I know it. Their balls have so much movement that it's abnormal. On the other hand, take Pedro Martinez. This guy is a freak. He has six pitches he throws for strikes from about six different angles. Tony Gwynn, the best hitter in baseball today, is overmatched against Martinez. I think I'd be overmatched against Martinez. I really don't think I could hit him, and I've never said that about a pitcher.

PLAYBOY: What's the biggest misconception about Pete Rose?

ROSE: That I was suspended for betting on baseball. Under baseball's Rule 21 you can be banned for three things: bribing an umpire, betting on baseball [specifically, on one's own team; betting on baseball in general carries a one-year suspension] and associating with undesirables. In the agreement I signed, it says there's no finding that Pete Rose bet on baseball. What is so hard to understand about that? Ask any fifth grader what "no finding" means. It means I didn't do it. When Bart Giamatti and Peter Ueberroth, who was the outgoing commissioner, summoned me to New York that spring, I admitted to them that I had bet $2000 on the San Francisco 49ers against the Cincinnati Bengals in the last Super Bowl. They said, "We could care less about that." Then they told me to lie. I'm getting ready to leave and I say, "Gentlemen, I left spring training to come here, and when a manager leaves spring training for a day, people want to know where the fuck he went. What do I tell 'em?" They say, "Tell the press the new commissioner wanted to talk to you about things in the best interest of baseball." Now to me, that means I went to New York to help the new commissioner get off on the right foot. From the beginning, they were lying about the case.

PLAYBOY: Your old teammate Johnny Bench has said he doubts your side of the story. He said, "If Pete didn't do it, why doesn't he say he didn't do it?"

ROSE: Because I couldn't! I was under a gag order—I'd agreed not to talk about it. It hurt when Bench said that, because I took Johnny under my wing when he came up to the Reds. But it became a jealousy situation. Johnny Bench is jealous that I was more popular than he was. He's jealous that they named a street outside Cinergy Field Pete Rose Way, not Johnny Bench Way. Johnny has a big ego, and he's kind of pissed off that people like me. The next time Johnny Bench does a radio or TV show, someone should ask him, "Did you ever make an illegal bet on a football game?" See what he says.

PLAYBOY: Is gambling a danger to society and to baseball?

ROSE: I don't think it should be a crime. I've got a 15-year-old son, Tyler, and a ten-year-old daughter, Cara Chea, and if they were going to do one of the following things—be an alcoholic, be a drug offender, beat their wife or their husband, or gamble—I hope they would gamble. Ty Cobb and Tris Speaker are in the Hall of Fame and they were known gamblers. Leo Durocher associated with known gamblers and he's in the Hall. Guys in other sports have been suspended for a year for gambling—look at Paul Hornung and Alex Karras in football. If Bart Giamatti were smart, he would have fined me on the day I was called to New York. People would have accepted that. I would have accepted it, and the whole thing would have ended.

PLAYBOY: Do you think Giamatti was biased against you?

ROSE: Look at who Bart Giamatti was. When he was president of Yale, he was kind of a powermonger. He wrote papers saying that absolute power ain't so bad. So here's a guy with that mentality taking over as commissioner of baseball, and who was the number one guy in the game? You're looking at him. But baseball didn't need me. I wasn't a player anymore, I was a manager. Do you think I'd have been suspended if I was a player? No fucking way. Look at Albert Belle. He wrote $40,000 in money orders to bookmakers during the season, and what did baseball do? Nothing.

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With me, it was easy for baseball to say, Let's take the household name and straighten his ass up. Funny how they never say that to a guy doing drugs. If I had been busted for drugs instead of gambling, I'd still be managing the Reds and baseball would be paying for my rehab.

PLAYBOY: You call baseball's Dowd report a biased "prosecutor's brief," but Dowd didn't invent the 29 checks that wound up with bookmakers, or the fingerprints on betting slips.

ROSE: I'm not going to tell you I didn't bet. I did—I bet on football. Just look when those checks were mailed. They went out in the winter. I was making my payoffs for football games. The betting slips they got are football betting slips.

PLAYBOY: One that was dated April 9, 1987 features baseball games. One of the games is listed as Cin at Mont—Reds at Expos—with a W after Montreal.

ROSE: Was there a circle? The team you bet on would have a circle around it.

PLAYBOY: Isn't that what that W means, that you'd be betting on Cincinnati?

ROSE: No. How can that be? Who's the favorite? Who's the underdog? That's not a real betting slip. They also said I bet the same amount on every game, $2000. But you can't bet two dimes on baseball games because every game, from what I'm told, is different. Depending on who's pitching, sometimes you have to put up more than two grand to win two grand. That's how the odds work in baseball.

PLAYBOY: The fingerprints on the betting slips?

ROSE: The piece of paper they're telling you about, with those games they say I bet on—they say it has one thumbprint of mine. One print. But would a betting slip that I did a lot of writing on have one fucking thumbprint on it? Anyway, my handwriting experts say all those betting slips are so faded and discolored, they wouldn't stand up in court. I'm not saying they were forged. I'll leave that to my experts. I am saying I didn't write them. Who did? Someone who has no knowledge of baseball. Just look at the date of that Reds–Expos game and you'll see it was Montreal at Cincinnati, not Cincinnati at Montreal. You think I'd bet on a game and I don't know who the fucking home team is?

PLAYBOY: Dowd believed he caught you in a lie over a $34,000 check written in March 1987. He said you claimed it was to cover losses on the 1987 Super Bowl and NCAA basketball championships, but the NCAA tournament began the same day as the date on the check.

ROSE: What's his point? That I was making payoffs on baseball? It was March—was I betting on spring training games? Is John Dowd so dumb he can't figure out that I was betting on college basketball all winter? Does he think I only bet the NCAA tournament? He didn't catch me in no lie.

PLAYBOY: Then why did you sign the agreement with Giamatti and not fight on in court?

ROSE: My lawyers and I were preparing to go to federal court when baseball called us. They wanted to suspend me, and they wanted me to wait 22 years before I could apply for reinstatement. We said, "You're crazy." So the next morning they came back and said 11 years. Again we said no way. That afternoon they said "OK, make it one year." I could still have gone to court, but I would have also had to spend another half a million dollars in legal fees. I was happy to get the fucking thing over with, because for six fucking months every time I left my house there was a camera in my face. I'm surprised I didn't get radiation burn. So we said OK, a year. I signed the agreement with no finding that I bet on baseball—the same finding I would have gotten in court. As far as its being a lifetime suspension, maybe I misread that. Maybe I misconstrued it. I never saw it as permanent. I looked at it as a chance to come back in one year. A lot of people go to prison for life, but then they apply for parole and get out, right?

PLAYBOY: Are you a compulsive gambler?

ROSE: Ten years ago I asked myself, Could I have a problem? I went to Gamblers Anonymous. I went to see a doctor. Then I went on *The Phil Donahue Show* and said I had a problem, which is what that doctor told me. I didn't believe it, and it was a big mistake. From then on, if I was anywhere near a racetrack or a casino someone would see me and go, "Uh-oh, what's he doing here?"

But I knew I wasn't a compulsive gambler. I told that doctor, "I've never taken my gas or phone or electric bill money or my house payment to the track." You may think I'm a fucking genius in baseball, but I'm like everybody else who bets on sports. Nobody wins. You bet for enjoyment, for pleasure, for entertainment, but not to make money.

You know why I go to the track? Because I used to go with the only person I've ever idolized, my dad. He would take me to the track on Saturday mornings when I was a kid. My dad wasn't a compulsive gambler, he was a recreational gambler. So am I.

PLAYBOY: You had trouble with the commissioner in 1988—a 30-day suspension and a $10,000 fine—for bumping umpire Dave Pallone during a rhubarb. Did you know at the time that Pallone was gay?

ROSE: Yeah, I knew. We all knew. Something like that gets around, just like you know if somebody in baseball has HIV. But I didn't care that he was gay. I cared that he made a horseshit call at first base that cost me a goddamn ball game, and when I was arguing with him he scratched me with his fingernail and cut my face. That's when I pushed him. I should have killed the son of a bitch. Dave Pallone—that was another fight baseball didn't want. After that, he got into trouble. [Accused in a sex scandal, Pallone was cleared but forced to leave the game.] Giamatti gave him six figures to retire because he didn't want to fire a gay umpire and take on the gay activists.

PLAYBOY: Let's say Selig reinstates you. Do you call Reds general manager Jim Bowden and ask for your old managing job back?

ROSE: I'm not gonna call nobody. I'll wait and see. But there are a couple teams right where I live that need somebody like me in the worst way, because they have bad attitudes. I'm talking about the Dodgers and the Angels. Those teams have too much talent to be as bad as they've been, and I'm a hell of an attitude changer.

PLAYBOY: You had a good quote about the Cubs' losing ways.

ROSE: God told the Cubs, "Don't do anything until I get back." They're a good example of the attitude I'm talking about. The Cubs have great fans, but I think the fans are partly responsible for that team's demise. Cubs fans go to see the Cubs play. Reds fans go to see the Reds win. Cubs fans have been through losing so long that they go to the game to have fun, sit in the bleachers, take their shirts off and look at the ivy. When you don't get pissed off about losing, you get in a rut, and the Cubs have been in that rut for a long time. I loved it when Don Baylor took over as manager and said it's great to be part of such a great tradition. What tradition?

PLAYBOY: Could you step in and manage a team tomorrow?

ROSE: I've already picked out my coaching staff: Doug Flynn, Tony Perez, Dave Parker and Wally Horsman [who operates the Bucky Dent Baseball School].

PLAYBOY: Why didn't the Reds give your son Pete Jr. a longer look?

ROSE: That is a mystery to me and to Petey. He was called up from the minors for two weeks at the end of the 1997 season. He started one game, on Labor Day, which was heavily promoted. The Reds had sold 12,000 season tickets that year. They had 34,000 for that game. Petey got a base hit and made two good plays at third base. Now, wouldn't you think he made enough money for the Reds that day, and showed enough promise, to be invited to spring training the next year? But he wasn't. My son is 6'2", 240 pounds, solid as a rock, a gamer, a guy everybody loves, a guy who hits .300 every year.

A writer from Dayton told me that after Pete made an error in another game, Jack McKeon, the manager, said, "That's all I need to see of this Rose kid." Petey thinks it wasn't because of any error but because he got to the ballpark earlier than McKeon did, and McKeon thought he was making him look bad, being in

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Rosie O'Donnell reading THE BEAN TREES.

the clubhouse before the manager.

PLAYBOY: You have problems with McKeon? He was the National League manager of the year.

ROSE: The problem McKeon may have with me is that Jim Bowden said he'd love to hire me as the manager if I was eligible. Maybe McKeon sees me as a threat. I hope he's not so shallow that he held that against my son.

PLAYBOY: Do you still talk to Pete Jr.'s mom, your first wife, Karolyn?

ROSE: Not since I had to get a court order to take Petey to the 1980 World Series. We were going through a divorce, which Karolyn didn't want, and that was her way of getting back at me. She thought that I was sleeping around.

PLAYBOY: You mean you weren't?

ROSE: When I was 22, 23, 24 years old, I made mistakes with my family life. But to do everything people said I did, I would have needed three dicks. I was never the type to go out looking for pussy in every town. If I liked somebody in the town I was in, I would take her to the next town so I didn't have to go out looking. It's better to know who you're sleeping with. You won't catch a disease. One time a girl sued me for paternity. Not the one in Tampa—that was legitimate. This one was in Franklin, Ohio, and I didn't even fuck this girl! How can you knock up a girl you don't even fuck?

PLAYBOY: You once noted nastily that Karolyn had gone from a size two to a size 20——

ROSE: All I was saying is that someone who wants to stay married to me should care about her appearance. That's a matter of self-respect and respect for me. Look at me. I could still play. I'm not sexist, and what I like most in a woman isn't physical. It's the way she carries herself. That's how you tell if she's confident, bright, intelligent. I think Hillary Clinton is sexy. She gets better and better. She'd make a hell of a president. Same thing goes for Dole's wife. I like [Texas Senator] Kay Bailey Hutchison. I like Barbara Walters.

PLAYBOY: Barbara Walters is sexy?

ROSE: I find all kinds of women sexy. I'm not queer, so why wouldn't I?

PLAYBOY: There's a story that you went to a strip joint in Mexico, jumped onstage and had sex with one of the strippers.

ROSE: My first year with the Reds, we went to Mexico City during spring training. It wasn't a strip club. I've never been in a strip club. It was a bar. I was 22. I was there with some of my teammates, and in the next room was the manager, Fred Hutchinson, a real tough son of a bitch. He saw me and said, "What the fuck are you doing here, kid?" I was scared to death of the man, but I said, "What the fuck are you doing here?" And from that night on, he liked my style. That's why he started me as a rookie. But public sex? Shit, no.

PLAYBOY: The Reds' veterans weren't too crazy about you.

ROSE: They had Don Blasingame at second, a guy they really liked. All of a sudden Hutchinson puts this young, brash rookie in the lineup. I'd already gotten a reputation—in spring training we played the Yankees, and Mickey Mantle and Whitey Ford called me Charlie Hustle. The name got in all the papers and it stuck. So these guys didn't want to associate with me. The only guys that would were the black players, guys like Frank Robinson and Vada Pinson. I was actually called into the Reds' front office and told to stop hanging around with the blacks. This came from Mr. William O. DeWitt Sr., the owner, and Mr. Phil Seghi, the assistant general manager. I thought that was stupid. You win and lose as a team; what does a guy's skin color have to do with it?

PLAYBOY: Yet you're still friendly with former Reds owner Marge Schott, who referred to her "million-dollar niggers" after she bought the Reds in 1985.

ROSE: I don't think Marge Schott is a racist. I think Marge don't like anybody. She thinks everyone's against her. Is Marge a Nazi because someone was at her house and found a swastika in a dresser drawer? Because the person who found it is Jewish, he said, "What's up with this?" Marge said a veteran had given it to her as a souvenir, but the press made it sound like there were swastikas all over her damn house.

PLAYBOY: What about her saying, "Hitler was OK at the beginning. He just went too far"?

ROSE: That's just Marge. Hitler was too extreme, we all know that, but Marge is harmless.

PLAYBOY: OK, Marge Schott's not a racist. How about John Rocker, who, during his infamous *Sports Illustrated* tirade against foreigners, single mothers and "queers with AIDS," called one of his Braves teammates a "fat monkey"?

ROSE: I don't know John Rocker. But from watching his teammates talk about him, and from guys who knew him in the minor leagues, I don't think he's a racist. Nobody ever said he was a racist. I mean, are you a racist part-time? Here is a young kid who made some stupid statements he probably regrets, but he didn't expect the writer to put them in the article. I don't know if what the writer did to him is fair or not, but he may have done a lot of harm. I don't know if Rocker can weather what happened. I hope he can. But he didn't pitch all that good after taking on the people in New York in the playoffs. You really have to be a special type of person, mentally, to go through that and keep your cool. I know, because the same thing happened to me in 1973 when the Reds played the Mets in the playoffs. I took the entire brunt of New York in that series, especially after I had that fight with Bud Harrelson, which started after I slid hard into him to break up a double play and he called me a cocksucker. I told

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him, "I don't go that way." They wanted to kill me in New York. But I hit a home run in the 12th inning to win the next game, and I think I was the only guy alive who could have done that, to play the whole city of New York and beat them. That could really fuck up his head.

PLAYBOY: Who's going to win it all this season?

ROSE: The Mets. Most improved of anyone. They were good last year, and getting Mike Hampton, a real good left-handed pitcher, will put them over the top. Even though they signed Todd Zeile to play first base, I think Mike Piazza is going to play there eventually, because it'll save wear and tear on his body. He was all beaten up last year. Obviously, you have to consider the Yankees, because they've really earned that respect. And now that they signed a new contract with Madison Square Garden, the money from that will allow them to fill in any needs. The teams that played good last year will be good again. The Braves will be good. The Indians will be good. But the Red Sox aren't any better than they were at the end of last season, and they had a lot of guys that had career years. And even though the Astros lost Hampton to the Mets, it ain't gonna be a lock for the Reds. Don't forget they lost Juan Guzman. If anything, the Cardinals will be better because they picked up some needed pitching. They brought Andy Benes back. I just want to see Mark McGwire get a shot at a World Series. He and Sammy Sosa are guys we need to see in October. The game needs to see that.

PLAYBOY: How would you rate yourself as a parent? Your first wife has said you found it extremely hard to show emotion.

ROSE: But my kids knew I loved them. Maybe I missed Petey's Little League games when I was on the road, but I can't think of any ballplayer who was as close to his son. When the team was at home, Petey went to the ballpark every fucking night. He was there a lot more than Ken Griffey Jr. was. Looking back, I think there's only one person I ever cheated: my daughter Fawn. And I wouldn't have cheated her if she'd been a boy. I couldn't take her to the ballpark. A girl couldn't go into the clubhouse, and how could I leave her sitting alone in the stands? What if somebody kidnapped her? But I didn't miss my little girl's graduation from college. I flew in on a private plane from St. Louis for it, and now Fawn is going to work for me in my restaurant in Los Angeles. I'm a better dad now—hugging and kissing my kids, telling them I love them. I never used to do that. A man has to be tough to survive, but he needs a gentle streak in him, too, or he'll end up miserable.

PLAYBOY: Ever cry?

ROSE: Twice. Once in 1970, when my father died. The other time was when I got my record-setting hit and was standing on first base, drinking in that nine-minute ovation, thinking about what my dad would have thought.

PLAYBOY: You've wept only twice in your 59 years?

ROSE: Actually, it was twice for a long time. Now I can get teary watching my daughter act. [Cara Chea, ten, has acted under the name Chea Courtney on *Melrose Place* and the daytime soap *Passions*.] God, her concentration and work ethic are just like mine were. Or I'll cry watching Tyler play basketball—he's 5'7" and can palm the ball. I cry at movies. I was so pissed off when the girl died in *Patch Adams*! I'm mellowing in my old age.

PLAYBOY: You once introduced your current wife to reporters by saying, "You would probably call her 'Wow,' but I call her Carol." Aside from the obvious, what attracted you to Carol?

ROSE: Her personality. She's built like an athlete, too, and she's a great mother.

PLAYBOY: People might be surprised that your marriage has lasted 15 years if they remember Roger Kahn's 1991 PLAYBOY article, in which Carol said that she was "lonely" and had "ambivalent sexual feelings" toward you. When Kahn said she could always leave you, Carol said, "Pete would kill me."

ROSE: Bullshit. I have a great marriage. Roger Kahn never talked to my wife. Next time you see Roger Kahn, ask him why he stiffed me for $25,000. He wrote a book with me called *Pete Rose: My Story*, a bullshit title because it was more his story than mine. The publisher paid the advance for the book but sent too much by mistake, and took the difference from what I got. So we went to Roger to get what he owed me, and he had pissed it all away. [Editor's note: Through his attorney, Kahn declined to discuss his relationship to Rose.]

Roger Kahn is yesterday's news. He's lived his whole life on one thing, *The Boys of Summer*, and he's got nothing else. Me and another writer, Peter Golenbock, were the only two guys at his son's wake.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of sportswriters, what do you think of women reporters in the locker room?

ROSE: I don't care if you wear a skirt or pants if you're a good journalist. It never bothered me if a woman was there to do a job. What bothered me was if she didn't care about writing sports but just wanted to be the first woman in there. Don't come in looking for trouble, trying to make guys feel uncomfortable. I think that's what happened with Samantha Stevenson, who sued baseball to be let into our locker room when I was with the Phillies. That girl had a mission. She even wrote an article about the size of basketball players' cocks. Is that all she had to do, stand around and look at cocks all day?

PLAYBOY: Stevenson had a few choice words about you after she interviewed you for PLAYBOY in 1979. She said it was you who seemed fixated on cocks, asking her, "How does it feel to have all those cocks staring you in the face? Doesn't it make you embarrassed? Do you like it?"

ROSE: Samantha Stevenson's credibility went out the window because of what she did to Julius Erving. She trapped him, didn't she? She had his baby [now tennis pro Alexandra Stevenson]. Does that speak well of her?

PLAYBOY: Your defender Bill Clinton was almost brought down by Monica Lewinsky. Was he wrong to lie about what they did in the White House?

ROSE: It's not acceptable to lie, but the press went too far. It wasn't anybody's business. There are very few people without skeletons in their closets. The only difference between me and President Clinton on one hand, and everybody else on the other, is that our skeletons are all out. So unless you're a saint about sex, or gambling, you'd better keep your fucking mouth shut.

PLAYBOY: You haven't been a saint, but plenty of baseball fans adore you. Has it been hell to be out of the game?

ROSE: No. I love baseball, but when I took the spikes off, the game was over for me. There was always more to my life. I'll tell you a story: It was 1967 and I was going to Vietnam, me and Joe DiMaggio. The only reason I agreed to the trip was to meet DiMaggio. We went to visit American military advisors in the Mekong Delta. So there we were, me and Joe DiMaggio, in the middle of the jungle, with the fucking war going on around us. I looked up and saw tracer bullets being fired out of helicopters, rat-a-tat-tat. Then the copters landed and they began loading bags, big black bags. They were body bags, with dead Marines inside. The bags were piled up in the street; I counted 21 of them. You see something like that and the importance of baseball disappears in a hurry.

PLAYBOY: Is that why you've sold so many of your awards, trophies and mementoes? Don't they mean anything to you?

ROSE: Go take a look around my restaurant in Florida, the Pete Rose Ballpark Café. What do you see? World Series rings, silver bats—it's all there. I love taking sportswriters there and saying, "Want to look at all the stuff I sold to pay my gambling debts?" I keep things that have special meaning: my first Gold Glove, my first batting championship trophy. The rest, I could care less. When I set the hits record, the story went around that I wore nine different uniforms that night and sold them all. You've heard that, haven't you?

PLAYBOY: We heard it and believed it.

ROSE: I wore three uniforms. One went to the Hall of Fame, one went to Marge Schott and the other I kept. The real story is never as bad as the writers want it to be.

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Tantric Sex

article by Amanda Green

our reporter crossed her legs into the squeeze and closed in on the art of a thousand thrusts. was it a good time to ask for the diamond stud earrings she'd been coveting?

JUST LIKE superstars, my husband, J., and I have delved into the magical, mystical world of tantric sex. What the hell is tantric sex, you may ask? Where have you been? Well, if you're like us—common folk—you've been muddling along in your basic missionary position, your gal-on-top, your occasional 69 for a Saturday night thrill, your S&M, your adult-baby-diaper romps (doesn't everybody?). In other words, missing out on ancient sexual secrets and a fast-growing trend.

Yes, it seems that tantric sex is rearing its godhead everywhere. Sting has gone on record saying he and Trudie keep it going for hours, courtesy of their tantric practices. So have the unshagadelic Michael Tucker and his wife, Jill Eikenberry (I don't want to imagine him so much as peeling an onion, let alone taking Jill for a marathon ride on his wild hog). The trendy TV show *Sex and the City* had an episode dealing with it. For me, the corker was reading a profile on Jim Carrey in *Vanity Fair*, in which Courtney Love describes her fellow actor as being "sexy in a tantric way." What the hell does that mean? I have no idea. But what J. and I had gleaned about the way of tantra—men able to do it all night, women brought to unbelievable heights of pleasure—piqued our interest. We decided to bone up on the subject.

KEEPING MY LEGS IN THAT POSITION FOR 30 SECONDS WAS VICTORY INDEED.

I went to our local megabookstore and found a shelfful of material, from no-frills instruction manuals to glossy coffee-table books to thick tomes with literal translations of the *Kama Sutra*. Wow! I thought. All these books just to get laid. And I'm married. I also found a pillow book version of the *Kama Sutra*, which features ancient Hindu illustrations of men with alarming saber-like penises, and couples engaged in baroquely contorted positions with unflattering names like Congress of a Herd of Cows (involving a guy with two or more ladies). It seems shy young Hindu couples would use the illustrations in bed to get aroused and convey what they wanted without having to speak. (Me, I would have pointed to the picture with the EXIT sign.)

I decided on *Tantric Sexuality: A Beginner's Guide*, by the serendipitously named Dick Craze, who has also brought us *Fêng Shui for Beginners*, *Graphology for Beginners* and *The Card Playing Kit*, to name but a few. Obviously the man is an expert. I also bought *Kama Sutra: An Intimate Photographic Guide to the Art of Love* for the dirty pictures (it credits neither an author nor photographer) and because it illustrates how to move from one position to the next, almost like a synchronized swimming routine. And finally, the pillow book with the ancient

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN REA

THE PAIR OF TONGS

sex prints, just to remind myself how glad I am that J.'s *shvantz* isn't shaped like a saber. Besides, we may want to try doing it standing on our heads one day, and then where would we be?

As soon as I got the books home, J. and I dove in, reading Mr. Craze's how-to in a quick couple of hours. To summarize 2000 years of aggregated wisdom: Tantric sex is an Eastern religious and practical philosophy that can, if properly employed, dramatically increase your sexual pleasure and improve your relationship with your lover. It advocates focusing on your partner's pleasure rather than your own, employing meditation, breathing and muscle-control techniques. Rather than share our Western goal of achieving ejaculation, tantric sex focuses on reaching plateaus of pleasure. The ancient tantric texts, like the *Kama Sutra*, hold that the act of making love can open your eyes to heaven, as opposed to the Western view of sex as a guilty pleasure to be enjoyed for ten minutes as a stress-reliever and sleep aid. (Wow! I thought as I read. These ancient dudes are strummin' my pain with their fingers.) In sum, tantric sex is a path to deeper lovemaking, an acquired skill that can be practiced for years and never mastered. J. and I decided to give ourselves a full week to get this tantric thing down.

THE YAWNING

Although you're supposed to do a series of exercises before you get to the sex part, spending so much time talking and reading about it got us all hot and bothered. We jumped in.

We started with one of the simpler exercises: The couple is supposed to have intercourse sitting up face-to-face without moving at all, just breathing together and looking into each other's eyes.

We found the exercise incredibly hypnotic and erotic. I felt as if I were looking into J.'s soul and baring my own as we stared into each other's eyes for what seemed like an eternity. In linear time, however, it was about 45 seconds before we said fuck it and just went at it like rabbits, shattering the Zen of the moment but producing a couple of toe-curling orgasms.

Next night, equally impetuous, we dabbled in deep tantric waters. J. tried to hold on to his *ching*, or precious ejaculation, for dear life; I was gunning for the opening of my sweet lotus flower and riding him like a pony to achieve it, his *ching* be damned. Although in tantric sex there are supposed to be no damaging Western labels, I would have to say our sex that night was wrong. We decided thereafter to come up with a game plan.

THE RISING

I enjoyed calling J. at his office and giving him the drill for the evening.

"First we're going to open our chakras, then you're going to stick your lingam in my yoni. Be home by eight."

"Tonight it's the Congress of the Crow. Make sure your feathers are clean."

"If this is Tuesday, it must be the Art of a Thousand Thrusts. Hold on to your *ching*."

"Check," he'd whisper hoarsely.

It sure beat, "What do you want for dinner tonight, stir-fry or take-out?"

WOMAN ON TOP

We started out trying a series of woman-on-top positions from the *Kama Sutra*, as interpreted by Professor Craze, beginning with the Pair of Tongs. After brief foreplay ("So, let's try that Tongs thing, OK?"), I got on top of J., sitting upright with my knees bent. We took care to look at each other. "This is nice," I said. And it was, but we were eager to nail a few. Herr Craze describes the next move, the Spinning Top, as difficult and warns that it can be "potentially painful for the man." Of course, the gauntlet had been thrown, and we couldn't pass up trying.

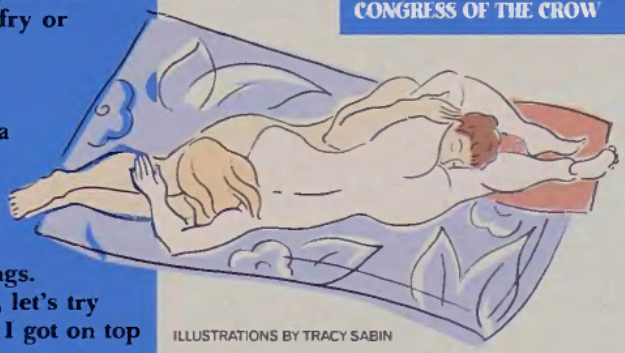
For lack of a more graceful description, the Spinning Top requires the woman to sit on her man and rotate. J. and I performed the feat gingerly. It wasn't pretty, but we didn't sustain any injuries. I found myself facing the wall and just sitting there. While it made us proud of our athletic prowess, it didn't really do anything for me, and I redubbed it Woman Playing Jacks, With Penis Inserted in Her Vagina.

SPLITTING THE BAMBOO

From the Spinning Top it was a subtle adjustment into the Swing—and a whole new level of pleasure. I basically just leaned forward and moved, or was moved by J., in a gentle "swinging" motion. I found the position soothing, the pleasure intense, and I felt very connected to J. He was also delighted by the Swing, found it easy, felt very in control and applauded it as being "penocentric."

Next night, for comparison's sake, we tried an equivalent move called the Large Bee, as laid out in another tantric text, the *Ananga Ranga*. I was really looking forward to this one: The woman seemingly hovers over the

(continued on page 90)



CONGRESS OF THE CROW

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TRACY SABIN

"The time is always now. New millennium or not."

Holy Domingo

ivonne armant bares all about grandpa placido

When sexy 26-year-old Ivonne Armant submitted her photos to PLAYBOY, we were more than willing to feature the curvy Latina beauty. Imagine our surprise when Armant later revealed that her grandfather is world-famous operatic tenor Placido Domingo. "I didn't tell anyone until after my pictures were accepted," she says. "I got it on my own, and I like that." Armant's father, José Domingo, was married to her mother for two years, and Armant herself didn't discover the truth about her heritage until she was 15 (her mother had remarried a man who became the only father Armant ever knew). True to her creative genes, Armant starred in three Mexican soap operas and started a clothing boutique (she designed her own fashions) before deciding to move to Los Angeles. When she had exhausted her savings and was

Ivonne Armant longs for a meaningful relationship with her grandfather, Placido Domingo (pictured with her above). His son José was married to Armant's mother for two years.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ARNY FREYTAG

contemplating a move back to Mexico City, Armant appealed to her grandfather to help her pay for acting lessons, and he obliged. Despite his monthly checks, however, their relationship remains largely one between strangers. "Before I knew he was my grandfather I always admired him," says Armant. "I think he's fantastic and I would like to have a closer relationship with him someday."

Armant's independent spirit and will to forge ahead likely stem from her trauma at the age of 15 when she passed out at a gathering with friends and was pronounced dead in the emergency room. "I was completely dead for something like ten minutes," she says. "I had a vision. I saw my body in the hospital, my friends crying and another friend trying to call my parents. But I came back to life! Since then, I have premonitions, and weird things happen to me all the time." A lesser woman might have toned down her lifestyle after "crossing over," but Ivonne developed a fondness for thrill seeking. "I love to live on the edge—I love speed." You might find her swimming, water-skiing or dancing, but she really wants to skydive and race cars. Right now her focus is on acting classes and auditioning. She has even launched her own website, ivonnearmant.com, which she works on regularly. "I want people to see who I am, what I have done, what I want to do," says the self-proclaimed Latina powerhouse. "I read all my fan-club e-mail personally and, right now, I answer it all. Life is short, and I really have to do what I want to do." We wouldn't dream of stopping her.

"I like to live on the edge, and I have since I was little," says Armant. "I'd see a pool and just jump into it. When I was six, my dad would put me on his motorcycle and drive 120 miles per hour!"

Tantric Sex *(continued from page 80)*

The woman had a look of beatific pleasure; I now wonder if it wasn't a silent cry for help.

man, facing him, and makes wide hip gyrations, like—you guessed it—the industrious busy bee. I'm a gal who's partial to making the moves, but the *Ananga Ranga* warns women not to be too manlike as this will make the guy unhappy. Luckily, it takes more than hip thrusts on my part to threaten J.'s masculinity. In fact, he digs them. I quickly got down to business. J. absolutely loved it. For me it was a bit of a letdown—athletic but not particularly titillating. However, J.'s evident pleasure and appreciation spurred me on to pollination.

After I had danced like a bee to beat the band, we were both so stirred up we began making love again, just like the books recommended. At first, J. said that he sympathized with George Burns, who, at an advanced age, said his sex life was "like trying to shoot pool with a rope." But in the end, J. was a champ, employing the thrust of the Bear, alternating with the titillating thrust of the Mouse, and bringing me on home.

AND NOW, ON TO THE FLOOR EXERCISES

The following night, book in hand, we decided to try a series of choreographed moves that flowed easily from one to the next, at least as depicted in the *Photographic Guide*. We started out with the Opening Flower, or missionary position, which was like revisiting a fond old friend. Soon it was time to move on to the Widely Yawning, a move that required me to raise my legs to the ceiling in a V-for-victory position. (Managing to keep my legs in that position for more than 30 seconds was victory indeed.) Then I brought my knees to my chest, my feet against J.'s chest as he kneeled. The book warns that this position is the "most intense" in the sequence. I had thought earlier the woman in the picture had a look of beatific pleasure on her face; I now wonder if it wasn't a silent cry for help. We quickly moved into the Rising, where I brought my legs straight up in front of me, touching his chest, as he remained kneeling. It was at the moment I crossed my legs into the Squeeze and flexed the old pubococcygeus that I should have asked him for the diamond stud earrings I've been coveting. He was in such ecstasy he would have said yes to anything. The next move, the Yawning, required me to hook my crossed feet over his shoulders, and it took some adjustment. From there it was but a hop, skip and a jump to the famous but ominously titled Splitting the Bamboo.

Splitting the Bamboo required me to unhook one of my legs and lower it, straightened, to the floor, lift it back up to his shoulder and then repeat the sequence with the other leg—kind of like pedaling a bike. The "rolling and squeezing" sensations these movements produce on the guy's dick are supposed to drive him crazy. I giggled as I dutifully brought one leg up, one leg down, not sure if I was doing it right. J. reacted somewhat like one does when trying an exotic dish—"Wow, snake meat really *does* taste like chicken." It was interesting, different, but you wouldn't want a steady diet of it.

I was beginning to feel like we were doing a routine in some New Age gymnastics competition. All we needed was the soaring title track from *Beauty and the Beast* or *Endless Love* blasting over loudspeakers and an Olympic arena full of screaming fans cheering us on as we performed our floor routine.

OPENING CHAKRAS, CONGRESS OF THE CROW

It wasn't until a few days later, when, like kids on a Sunday night who can't put off doing the dreaded book report one minute more, that J. and I finally got down to the meditation exercises. We just hadn't had the patience, but this night we did it up right. We darkened the room, lit candles, got undressed and lay head-to-toe, my hand lightly touching his lingam, his hand atop my yoni, assuming the position to feel the energy rising from our chakras.

By the way, chakras are energy centers, and the tantric belief is that men and women have six such centers, which govern all aspects of a person's emotional, physical and spiritual self. And when they're opened, ain't nothing can stop you. So starting at the "base chakra," located at the perineum (or what J. and I like to call the taint, as in *tain't this* and *tain't that*), and moving up to the "brow chakra" (in India, a *bindi* marks the spot), we breathed in and out, repeated to ourselves the accompanying mantra for each energy center (from *lam* to the famous om) and imagined each chakra to be a flower opening. I felt a little dumb at first, and it was hard to focus. But soon I felt myself relaxing and lightening, the distractions of the day fading away. I felt energized and incredibly sexual. J. loved the meditation as well (though shouting "Done!" triumphantly when he had completed the exercise probably wasn't what the holy of holies had in mind).

From there we went straight into what the *Beginner's Guide* calls the Congress of the Crow, better known to you and me as the old 69. The book illustrates a couple lying on their sides, a slight adjustment from our usual position that, in the end, made all the difference in the world. For one thing, I enjoyed the vista more than the usual view of the alien mothership putting down the flesh gangplank and preparing to land on my face. And this was a warm position, in which we could also hold each other. I felt myself relaxing, a residual effect from the chakra thing, and we had a great old time. Afterward, we kissed and were still so charged up we couldn't stop fooling around. We made love again. And it was awesome.

Not that I'm counting, mind you, but that evening J. surrendered his *ching* twice, and I had several orgasms of increasing intensity. When we finally looked up at the clock, we were delighted to discover we had been having sex for more than an hour and a half. It wasn't just the time thing, the intense pleasure and passion, or the fact that J. was easily able to have one orgasm after another. What made it so great for me was how close to each other it brought us, literally and otherwise.

THE ART OF A THOUSAND THRUSTS

This title is optimistic, but it refers to several tantric moves that, with careful practice, can prevent a man from ejaculating and allow him to make love continuously while giving his lover extreme pleasure. It involves a position called the Locking Position, another called the Squeeze Technique (both done by the man) and a carefully prescribed mix-and-match of thrusts from shallow (the Sparrow, the Mouse) to deep (the Wild Horse, the Boar, the Charging Boar, the Crashing Bore?—but I digress).

Well, we weren't going to attempt a thousand of anything without getting prepared. Once again we got naked, lit candles, meditated on our chakras and loved it. It was like revving up a plane before takeoff—firing up each engine one at a time, getting everything humming and primed. Any preoccupying thoughts melted away, and it was just me and J. and the night.

Four hundred thirty-two. That's the number of thrusts we clocked. Not that I was counting. At first it was excruciating for J., and me, too. He was

(concluded on page 171)

"You had your choice and you took the coffee."

travel gear

clothes with gadgets. why didn't we think of that?

fashion by HOLLIS WAYNE

Traveling has become a way of life. Whether heading for far-flung beach paradises, cobbled European alleys or vertical mountainsides of snow, life on the go is better with gadgets. Thanks to Samsonite, high tech no longer means low fashion. At left: Space age fabrics create the effect of removable layers in the temperature jacket ($695). The ceramic blend insulation was originally commissioned by NASA, but you don't have to wear moon boots with it anymore. The microfiber shell is water-resistant, too. Above: Samsonite doesn't call it the matte reflective travel pillow jacket ($595) for nothing—there's an inflatable neck pillow hidden in the collar. Clever inside pockets stow earplugs and a sleeping mask. (Binoculars from Sharper Image.) Above right: The nylon jacket with attached stopwatch ($595) enables you to check the legendary precision of European train timetables. Protect the rest of your gear in a slick metal Samsonite suitcase ($1075). Far right: The water-resistant voice jacket ($495) comes with a Nokia headset that can be conveniently wired into the collar. Inside the lightweight shell, the cord connects to a pocket so you can use a cell phone or tape recorder. Right: This microfiber jacket comes with a matching backpack ($765)—perfect for stowing the necessities of travel. (Portable DVD player by Sony.) Whether you're launching a yacht or toasting your arrival on a new continent, champagne (it's Moët et Chandon) is the only way to celebrate the style and practicality of the Samsonite line.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHUCK BAKER
PROP STYLING BY EYAL BARUCH FOR TRILISE
WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 186.

CRITICS' CHOICE

THE BEST BARS IN AMERICA

DRINK BY GERRY DAWES

a blue-ribbon panel of publishers, editors, writers, critics, chefs, restaurateurs and raconteurs choose the right places to hang out—from anchorage to key west

Bringing up the subject of a favorite bar is like asking who should be president. Everyone has his own candidate, as we discovered when we polled a blue-ribbon panel of food, drink and restaurant critics, publishers, editors, authors, restaurateurs, chefs and bon vivants. The bars picked by our panelists run the gamut from swank hotels and restaurants to atmospheric joints that have served generations of regulars. Skybar in West Hollywood is a hotel bar that packs in the supercool with a shoehorn. Other chic stop-offs include Bix in San Francisco, Red Square in Las Vegas (main attraction: an entire wall of cold vodkas and a bar top that's frozen) and the Greatest Bar on Earth. And business has never been better at *(continued on page 154)*

- **Chilkoot Charlie's** *Anchorage*
- **J-Bar, Hotel Jerome** *Aspen*
- **Mumbo Jumbo** *Atlanta*
- **Continental Club** *Austin*
- **Casablanca** *Boston*
- **Gibsons** *Chicago*
- **Samba Room** *Dallas*
- **Lili's 21** *Detroit*
- **Mercury Room** *Houston*
- **Green Parrot** *Key West*
- **Red Square** *Las Vegas*
- **China Grill** *Miami Beach*
- **Napoleon House** *New Orleans*
- **Campbell Apartment** *New York City*
- **Greatest Bar on Earth** *New York City*
- **Continental** *Philadelphia*
- **Froggy's** *Pittsburgh*
- **Bix** *San Francisco*
- **Coyote Café** *Santa Fe*
- **F.X. McRory's** *Seattle*
- **Timber Wolf** *Tempe*
- **Madam's Organ Restaurant and Bar** *Washington, D.C.*
- **Skybar** *West Hollywood*

SHOWSTOPPERS

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Kawasaki chose the Mondial du Deux Roues in Paris to unveil the Ninja ZX-12R, a fin de siècle cycle that claims to be the fastest production motorcycle ever built. Born in a wind tunnel (as one approaches 200 mph, the matter of aerodynamics becomes more than a passing interest), this Ninja is sleek, slippery and extremely sophisticated. No doubt about it: The ZX-12R has record-breaking balls. A bike for the few, the fearless.

KAWASAKI

By James R. Petersen You are looking at millennium missiles, motorcycles that represent the state of the art and beyond. Buzz travels fast on the information highway. Today, a motorcycle goes from concept to sculpted metal at the speed of imagination. Fanatics share rumors and sighs on the Internet, devote entire websites to artists' impressions of forthcoming models. Will Honda produce a V8 touring bike? Will Kawasaki reclaim the title of fastest production bike? Can Yamaha top the YZF-R1? What's Willie G. got up his sleeve? Will BMW export the C1, an enclosed motorscooter? Motorheads scan the pages of cycle magazines, seeking confirmation and permission to let craving accelerate. Every season at shows in Milan, Bologna, Paris and Tokyo, manufacturers unveil new models as well as one-of-a-kind concept bikes. The gorgeous creations whet the appetite and test the what-if factor. They stop time and your heart. Two of the bikes shown here are available now. Catch them if you can. Let the rest become the stuff of dreams.

The four-cylinder 1199cc fuel-injected, ram-air-breathing engine cranks out 180 or so horsepower. Wrap a lightweight monocoque frame around all that muscle, add a titanium exhaust and special rubber, and you have the formula for fost. All for $11,999.

PHOTOGRAPHY (ABOVE) BY RICHARD IZUI

WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 166.

HONDA

Not all concept bikes ore finished products: Toke this completely awesome vision of o sports touring motorcycle. Hondo unveiled the X-Wing at the Tokyo show; it is o design platform intended to elicit customer reaction to specific feotures. You moy see the ottention-riveting V6 on o future Gold Wing or power cruiser. The ergonomic, odjustoble cockpit is o user-friendly innovation thot hos drown raves. The bike olso features rear-facing lipstick cams instead of rearview mirrors, on outomatic transmission, linked brakes ond on Internet radio so you con motor across America while listening to WWOZ from New Orleans. Parts of the bike octually extend ot higher speeds to improve oerodynomics. (We thought only the rider did that.) Like the stylishness of this long-distance runner? Let your deoler know. Register your response at: www.hondo.com.

YAMAHA

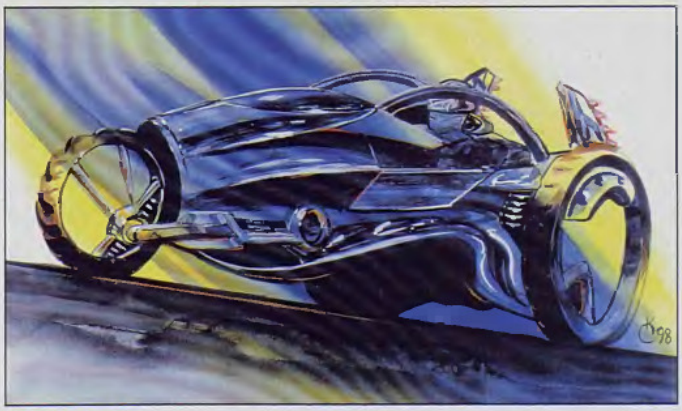
Coll it engine oesthetic. The design orm at Yamaho storted with the 1602cc V-twin developed for the classic cruiser Road Stor line [see *The Art of the Big Bike*, April 1999] ond created an eye-catching minimolist machine. The upswept exhoust pipes tucked under the seat, the tiny fuel tank, turn signals peeking from the ends of handlebars, the compressed frame ond o horizontol rear suspension (thot's the coil you see running down the side of the engine) all speak of o stripped-to-the-essentials meanness. The bike hos viscerol appeal: It invokes the V-Mox (Yamaho's legendary mirocle bike) while creoting totally forward-looking boulevord brutishness. The MT-01 is the ultimote styling exercise—it is part function, port fontosy; o glimpse of unfettered genius. This is o bike worth tracking through the pipeline. Check yomoho.com. Vote early. Vote often.

DUCATI

The Ducoti MH900e debuted ot the Intermot Munich Motorcycle show in 1998. One yeor later, the bike—o design tribute to legendory racer Mike Hailwood—wos the centerpiece ot Sotheby's first motorcycle ouction. The Pierre Terblonche prototype, offered ot o reserve of $500,000, wos pure ort to more than one eye—the most beautiful motorcycle in the world. Ducati rolled out the production model ot the 1999 Bologno show. This is ort you con ride, from the fuel-injected 904cc V-twin (said to pump out 79 horsepower) to the featherweight frome. In o bold stroke (one second into the new millennium Greenwich mean time) Ducoti become the first manufacturer to sell motorcycles over the Internet: While you were out celebroting, eoger buyers placed orders for the first 500 bikes (ot o unit price of $15,000). The line forms ot www.ducati.com.

Launchpad

The design deportments ot mojor manufacturers work in strict secrecy. Who wants to give the competition o free ideo? Motorcycle companies hove even odopted the Detroit practice of disguising test models with camoufloge ports. (Hey, meester—wont photos of the Horley/Porsche?) Whot does the pipeline hold? Americo is home to one of the hotbeds of tronsportation design—the Art Center College of Design in Posodeno (for the record, Willie G. Dovidson of Harley is an olumnus). Student projects ore worth o look: Dois Nogoo (below left) ond Kevin Corter (below right) offer two freewheeling visions of the future. Neat homework, eh?



OLD SOLDIERS

fiction by Brendan DuBois

what the feds needed was always ugly. this time, i had to handle an ex–soviet spy, a cold war leftover. i had absolutely no choice in the matter

When performing a boring chore like splitting wood, you tend to dwell on trivia to pass the time, such as the two distinct sounds you encounter during the job. The first is a thump, when the maul you're using makes a slight indentation into the wood. The other is a sharp crack, when you've started a major split that means you're almost finished with that chunk of soon-to-be firewood. Thoughts like these were going through my mind as I was about an hour into my morning woodcutting routine one spring Saturday.

Then a dark blue Ford LTD with government plates bumped its way up my dirt driveway, and I wasn't bored anymore.

And when Special Agent Cameron of the FBI and a companion got out of the car, I momentarily wondered what kind of sound a maul would make while being buried in the base of someone's skull.

Cameron carried a slim leather briefcase and his white hair was combed carefully over the back of his head, as if he had just had his picture taken for his official government ID. He had on a charcoal gray suit, unlike his companion, about 20 years younger, who wore blue jeans, white polo shirt and a dark brown leather jacket.

"Owen," Cameron said, as I rested near the woodpile. "I'd like to present Mr. . . . Smith. Mr. Smith works for another government agency."

I stuck out my hand and as Smith came forward to shake it, I wiped it off with my handkerchief, and Smith paused, the slight grin on his face steady under my

PAINTING BY KENT WILLIAMS

U.S AIR FORCE

insult. His dark brown hair was cut short and his blue eyes were bright, brittle and sharp. Underneath his polo shirt there seemed to be hard muscles. He looked like a guy who would spend his vacation in Europe, retracing Wehrmacht invasion routes through Poland with a smile on his face.

"Really?" I said. "And would that government agency be the GAO? Is your work being audited, Agent Cameron?"

Cameron didn't look pleased. "No. And this meeting has nothing to do with my previous visits. Mr. Smith has a matter to discuss with you, in private. When the two of you are finished, I'll take him back to Portland. That's it."

When the government pays your bills and keeps you alive, year after year, after any competent actuary would have written you off as dead long since, then I guess listening is the polite thing to do. So I shrugged and said, "All right, why don't the both of you come in."

Smith spoke for the first time. "That sounds grand." He came forward, but Cameron shook his head. "No," he said. "I want no part of this."

So Smith followed me into the farmhouse as Cameron trudged back to the LTD.

•

In the kitchen, I poured myself a tall glass of lemonade, offering nothing to my uninvited guest, and we sat at the round oak table. Perhaps I was being childish, but Smith didn't seem to notice. He leaned back in his chair and rested his large hands on his flat stomach.

"Agent Cameron gave me a thorough briefing on the way over here," he said. "You certainly have a fascinating past, Mr. Taylor."

"Ain't I lucky," I said.

"And it's that past that has brought me here," he said. "Your talents. We want to use them, just for a short time."

"Sorry, I'm retired."

His smile was wide and merry. "Sorry, in return. You've been unretired and turned over to us. And if you don't care to cooperate, we can make your life quite miserable very quickly. I know what you've got here. In return for certain past services, you live here in total freedom, save for a few minor restrictions. Like staying within the town limits. Which brings me to my next point. Ever hear of Marion?"

Something seemed to wiggle around in my throat. "Maximum security prison."

He waved a hand in the air. "No, not maximum. Maximum is a dime a dozen. I'm sure even this rural wonderland has a maximum prison. No, Marion is the ultimate federal penitentiary. An inmate lives alone in a concrete cube eight feet in each direction. Once a week, you get out for an hour for some sunshine and fresh air. That's it. No radio, no television, newspapers and books strictly controlled, and the food is government-supplied. So. We reach an understanding here, everything's fine. If not, tomorrow at this time, you'll be staring at concrete."

I tried to stay calm. "Special Agent Cameron——"

"Look," he interrupted. "Some time ago Cameron made a mistake. A big one. In a little Texas town called Waco. Ever wonder why he's way out here in this area? Waco is why. And Waco is why Cameron cooperates. Which includes lending one of his charges for a while. So, Owen. What's it going to be?"

I put my hands under the table because they were clenching into fists so hard that I could feel fingernails starting to break skin. "What do you want?"

He waggled a finger in my direction. "No, no, no. I want to hear the words from your mouth that you're on board. Then I will tell you what we have planned."

I nodded, and then said, "All right, I'm on board."

Smith's grin got wider. "Thanks. And I also won 20 bucks. Cameron bet me you'd say no. OK, here's the drill." He reached into his jacket and pulled out a small slip of paper and tossed it over. "There's a man named Len Molowski, lives up in Cardiff, about an hour north of here. He's in his mid-60s, owns a small farm. That's his address."

I glanced at the paper. "And what's so special about Len Molowski?"

"What's special is that his real name is Leonid Malenkov. He's a Soviet military intelligence operative, placed here in deep cover almost four decades ago. You know those Jap soldiers who lived on in Guam and the Philippines, years after the war was over, who didn't give up? Same story, except they're here and they're Russian."

"So?"

I guess that wasn't the response Smith was looking for, as his smile faded. "Some old records we've kept over the years, we've managed to finally decode them. You'd be surprised what's for sale now over in Moscow. We found Len's name and a bunch of other names, all Soviet military intelligence, all placed into this country at about the same time, during the late Fifties."

"And what was he going to do while in Maine? Burn down a forest?"

"Who knows and who cares," Smith said. "That he's still here is what counts. And that's why I'm here with you."

"At the risk of repeating myself, I'll do just that," I said. "So what? Hasn't the news gotten to you folks yet? The Cold War's over. They lost. We won. We have a hell of a budget deficit to pay, but they have McDonald's in Red Square, their nuclear subs are rusting and sinking at dockside and their soldiers spend their time harvesting potatoes and trying to stay alive. What's the point of going after this guy?"

His eyes flashed at me. "The point is, *we* know we won the Cold War, but some people in Moscow haven't gotten the message. They don't like having NATO move in next door. They don't like having American fast food next to Lenin's tomb. They don't like American game shows on their TV. And we want to send them a message."

I picked up the paper again. "And how does Len become part of this message?"

Smith's gaze was steady, unblinking. "We want you to go up to his farm. Pay him a visit. Confirm his background. And then handle it."

I was suddenly aware of how tired I was, from chopping all that wood and from talking to this awful young man. "Handle it how?"

"Don't play wedding night virgin with me, Owen. I've read your record, know your background. You know exactly what I meant by handle it."

I slowly nodded. "So I do. *Mokrie dela*, right? Russian for wet work. After all, blood is wet and tends to get on your shoes and clothing. A nice piece of euphemism from Department V of the old KGB. And by handling an old man who's probably clipping newspaper coupons and wondering how to pay for fertilizer this spring, this is going to do just what for you and your friends?"

"A message," Smith said slowly. "A demonstration. By retiring this old network of theirs, we make an effective demonstration to the right people with a minimum of fuss. More efficient and cheaper than flying over the Secretary of State to talk about trade issues or some other goddamn nonsense."

I crumpled up the paper. "And part of the minimal fuss is me, right? Deniability in case anything goes wrong. If I'm caught, I'm a career criminal with mysterious ties who one day killed a Maine farmer for no good reason. Right?"

"Who says retirees are losing their marbles," Smith said.

I looked out the window at the parked LTD and the man inside. "Part of my agreement with the Department of Justice is that I——"

"I know, I know," he said. "You're not allowed to leave the confines of this lovely little town without express prior permission, blah blah blah. All taken care of. You have a week, Owen. Seven

(continued on page 160)

"Who says the glory days of door-to-door salesmen are over?"

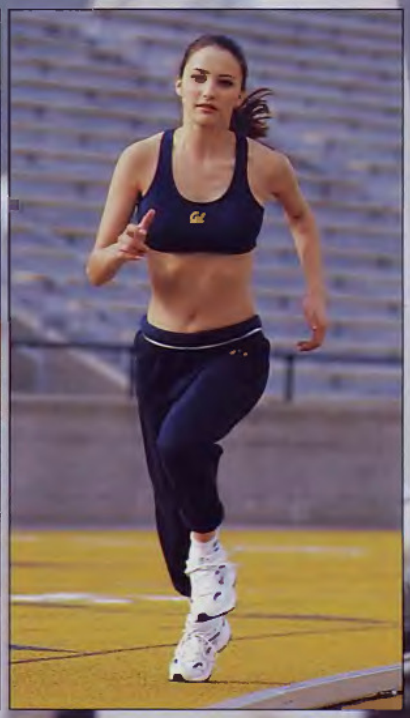
BOYZ 'N' BERRY

our miss brooke likes the active life and the company of men

BROOKE BERRY is happily taking in the never-ending Los Angeles street show—the hard bodies, fast cars, celebrities. Still, she misses northern California, especially mountain life in Tahoe City, where she grew up, and the spontaneity and experimentation at Berkeley, where she attends college. It's late Friday afternoon in LA and the 20-year-old British Columbia native is wrapping up a weeklong shoot at PLAYBOY's west side photo studio. During a break, Brooke visits the studio's library and as she peruses several back issues of PLAYBOY, it's apparent she's proud to join a celebrated contingent of Canadian Playmates that includes Pamela Anderson Lee and Dorothy Stratten. "The ratio of good-looking women is the same in Canada, but PLAYBOY attracts more of them somehow. Maybe we're just funnier, better-looking people," Brooke says, laughing. Still, California looms large. The well-read English major disagrees with author Thomas Wolfe—she believes you can go home again. "Southern California people care more about their bodies, and they exercise at the gym," says Brooke. "Northern California people go hiking. Down here, it's the way you look. Up there, anything goes." And so goes Brooke.

Q: Since anything goes, what's the most spontaneous thing you've ever done?

A: Having sex on a stranger's boat is pretty spontaneous. And I'm planning to make love on a ski gondola this year.



Whether it's playing ball with the Cal baseball team or just hanging out, Brooke prefers the company of men. "I feel more comfortable around guys," she explains. "They're straightforward." Brooke's ski patrolman father, Brian, and her uncle, Sixties music legend Jan (of Jan and Dean), are among her early male influences.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA AND ARNY FREYTAG

Q: Well, have you ever appeared naked in public?

A: Yeah. I'm kind of a nudist, actually. My friend and I once ran up and down her street naked. It was fun. I've gone hiking nude in the woods around Lake Tahoe.

Q: You go to school in Berkeley, a center of protest and change. What would you like to change?

A: I think we need to get away from dwelling on unimportant things like jobs and cars and the way we dress, and start realizing that there's much more out there. We need to improve ourselves and help other people and get along.

Q: What was the best thing to come out of the Sixties?

A: The music. The whole attitude. The sexual revolution made people more open to different experiences and more open-minded in general. I don't think free love and peace are ever going to happen. But other concepts still apply today.

Q: Have you ever made love in a Volkswagen van?

A: Not in a Volkswagen. I've made love in a Subaru—in a few, actually—and in pickup trucks.

Q: What are your favorite words to say when you're making love?

A: [*Laughs*] I use adjectives and adverbs. I tell him to go harder, faster, deeper. Those are my three favorite words. Sometimes—slow, gentle. Depends on the person.

Q: What do men first notice about you?

A: I hate to say it, but I think it's my looks first. And I think a lot of men are intimidated, which kind of sucks. I wear short shorts, so maybe they notice my legs. Probably my breasts. I guess they notice my face. I'm sure it depends on the person, too, on what he prefers.

Q: What do you notice first about men?

A: When I first meet a man I notice how tall he is, how well he's built, his smile, his hair, how he dresses, his style. How he carries himself is important, too. Whether he seems confident or shy.

Q: You're half Japanese and half Scandinavian. Which half is more fun?

A: I don't want to choose,

but Japanese people are pretty conservative and tightly wound, in general. If I had to say which side is more fun, it's the European side.

Q: How will appearing in PLAYBOY change your life?

A: Well, I had a picture in the most recent Pac Ten issue and that has already changed my life. People treat me differently now. I'm meeting a lot of people I would never have met before, like Hugh Hefner. It's definitely been life-changing.

Q: Is there a celebrity you want to meet?

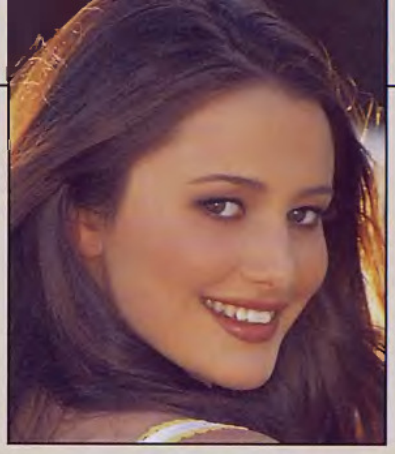
A: I'd love to meet Matt Damon. I'd love to meet Ben Affleck. I really want to meet Leonardo DiCaprio. And it's not because I think he's cute or because women have a crush on him—it's just because he's really famous.

Q: Your father is a ski patrolman and your mother is a teacher. What are some important life lessons you've learned from them?

A: This is so corny. It's much more important to have a good personality and to be a kind person, an educated person, than it is to look good, because that only lasts a few years. The person on the inside is going to be with you for the rest of your life. You're the person you're going to have to live with.

With Brooke's lifestyle rooted in small-town mountain living ("I'm young, down-to-earth, fun-loving—you know, someone you would meet next door"), her sexiest fantosy reflects Americana. "On the Fourth of July we have fireworks over the loke and people take their boats out. I've always wanted to have sex on a boat underneath a sky filled with thousands of fireworks. That would be really cool."

MISS MAY
PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH
Brooke Berry



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Brooke Berry

BUST: 36C WAIST: 24½ HIPS: 34

HEIGHT: 5'8" WEIGHT: 115 lbs.

BIRTH DATE: 3/7/80 BIRTHPLACE: British Columbia, Canada

AMBITIONS: To get my masters degree in English and to live a successful, happy life.

TURN-ONS: Intelligence, confidence, humor. A person who wants to succeed and can.

TURNOFFS: Arrogant, vain and selfish people. Also, bad breath or body odor.

I COULD NEVER BE: Dishonest.

I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT: Good companionship, my dog Sadie, music and Lake Tahoe.

MY FAVORITE COLOR IS: Grey.

WORDS TO LIVE BY: Always be a good person and a good friend and respect everybody.

THE HARDEST PART OF BEING A PLAYMATE: Is filling out this data sheet!

Me & Jack

Cross-country ski race in high school

Looking at the college issue

SOCIOLOG

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

A good old boy was sitting on his porch when a young man walked up with a pad and pencil in his hand. "What're you selling, young man?" the local asked.

"I'm not selling anything," the fellow said. "I'm the census taker."

"A what?"

"A census taker. Every ten years we try to find out how many people there are in the United States."

"Well, shucks," the man answered, "you're wasting your time with me. I have no idea."

THIS MONTH'S MOST FREQUENT SUBMISSION: The Texan bought a round of drinks to celebrate the birth of his son, "a typical Texas baby boy weighing 20 pounds." Congratulations showered upon him.

Two weeks later he returned to the same bar. "Say," the bartender asked, "how much does your boy weigh now?"

"Ten pounds," the fellow boasted.

"What?" the barkeep said. "But you said he weighed 20 pounds at birth!"

The Texan took a long swig from his Lone Star, wiped his lips on his shirtsleeve, leaned into the bartender and proudly announced, "I had him circumcised."

Shortly after checking into his hotel room, a businessman noticed a dead cockroach on the floor. He called the front desk, asked for the manager and raised hell.

"Sir, please calm down," the manager said. "It's dead. It can't bother you."

"The dead one doesn't bother me," the guest replied. "It's his damn pallbearers."

Sam decided to spend Passover in Jerusalem. He went to the Wailing Wall and saw a man davening with great intensity. He wanted to ask what he was praying for but waited patiently for him to complete his prayers. Five, ten, 20, 30 minutes passed. Finally the man finished. The visitor told him how impressed he was with his devotion and his intensity of prayer. "But I have to ask," he said, "what did you pray for?"

"I prayed for a son, for a good growing season, for health and happiness for my family, for a long life and for peace and harmony throughout the world."

"Tell me," said the visitor, "do you think your prayers will help?"

"Who knows?" the man replied, shrugging. "It was like talking to a wall."

One Sunday morning, Preacher Williams gazed sternly from the pulpit. "Brothers and sisters," he intoned, "I have learned that there has been some he'n and she'n going on. I won't have fornication among my flock. I want all who have been involved in this vile activity to remove themselves from my church!"

A sizable number of men and women slowly shuffled out the door. "Brothers and sisters," the preacher continued, "I've also been told of some he'n and he'n going on. I will not tolerate that activity either. All those involved remove themselves from my presence." A number of embarrassed men quickly departed.

"Now, brothers and sisters," he went on, "we also have to deal with some she'n and she'n. All of you guilty of that, get out of my church."

After the women had departed, the preacher looked around and saw just one boy left in the church. "My son," he said, "I want to praise you for being such an upright, Christian young man."

"Not so fast, Preacher," the boy interrupted. "If you'd gotten down to the me'n and me'n, I'd be on my way out the door, too!"

Why do so few Jewish mothers drink? Because alcohol dulls the pain.

A man was mowing his lawn when his blonde neighbor came out of her house, opened the mailbox, slammed it shut and stormed back inside. A little later she came out and did the same thing again. After the third time, the guy had to ask, "Is something wrong?"

"There sure is!" she complained. "My stupid computer keeps saying, 'You've got mail.'"

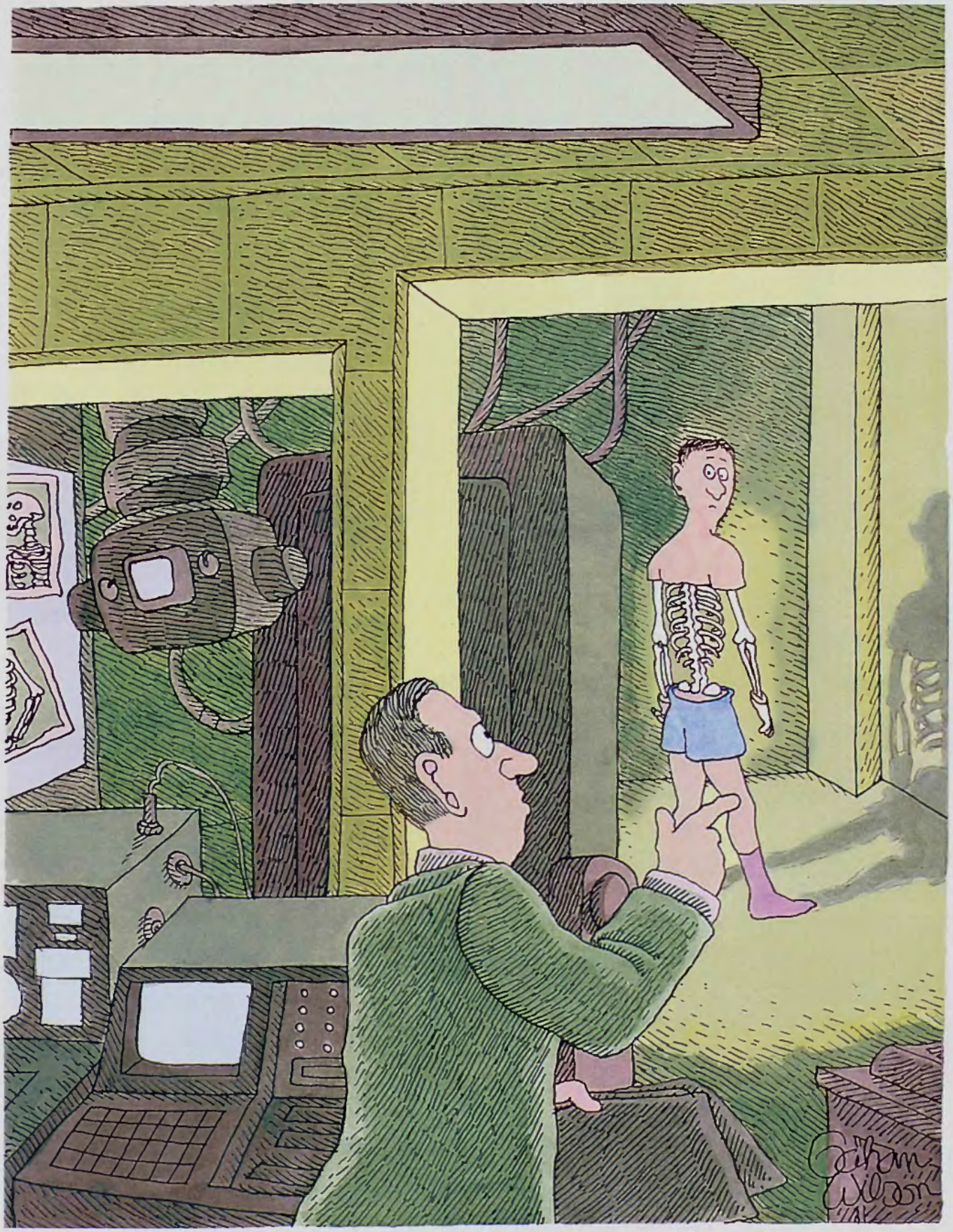
Kilroy Newman

PLAYBOY CLASSIC: In the days before birth control pills, a young bride-to-be asked her gynecologist to recommend some contraceptive methods. He suggested she try withdrawal, douches or condoms.

Several years later the woman was walking down the street with three children when she happened to run into her former doctor. "I see you decided not to take my advice," he said, eyeing the kids.

"But I did, Doc," she exclaimed, "Davey here was a pullout, Darcy was a washout and Delores was a blowout!"

Send your jokes on postcards to Party Jokes Editor, PLAYBOY, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or by e-mail to jokes@playboy.com. $100 will be paid to the contributor whose submission is selected. Sorry, jokes cannot be returned.



"Would you please step back to the machine while I make an adjustment?"

DON'T WORRY, WE ONLY KILL EACH OTHER

FROM DON CORLEONE TO TONY SOPRANO, THE MOB HAS HAD AN UNCANNY GRIP ON OUR IMAGINATION. COLORFUL CHARACTERS? FUHGEDDABOUTIT. THESE GUYS ARE KILLERS

BY JAMIE MALANOWSKI

Let's face it: Deep inside every man there is a mobster yearning to breathe free. He may be a small mobster, a weenie among mobsters, a mobster who doesn't do anything but put on a pinkie ring occasionally. Why? It's simple. We all want to seem cool, we all want to seem tough, we all want to look like we know our way around a broad and a pool cue and the business end of a calamari. Like the Old West, mob life is one of America's great myths, and we can't get enough of it. The mob has provided an alter ego for each American era. It doesn't matter that real mobsters, men like Sam Giancana and Albert Anastasia and Carmine "the Snake" Persico, were and are brutes and thugs and sociopaths who would without effort turn us into sausage meat. Inside all of us is a little mobster yearning to breathe free.

Vito Corleone of *The Godfather* was the mob's first hero. Thanks to Vito, men who had previously rooted for Eliot Ness, who for years listened to Sinatra without detecting a hint of subtext, suddenly began picturing their enemies asleep with the fishes. *The Godfather* is set in the Fifties, but it is truly a Seventies picture. Vito rejected authority while living an ethical life—at least within the norms of the society he inhabits. The little mobster inside was delighted.

Hollywood fed us more mobsters after *The Godfathers*, all less magisterial than Vito: the over-the-top *Scarface*, the scheming outerborough thugs of *Goodfellas*,

THE QUOTABLE MOBSTER

In mob history, turning a phrase is second only to turning informant

the pathetic small-timers of *Donnie Brasco*, the downsized Michael of *Godfather Part III*. Filling the gap fell to John Gotti, who offered the public glamour, bravura and some Teflon-coated escapes. He ruled while establishment types were acting like mobsters: Savings and loan officials looted the safes, Oliver North stonewalled Congress, George Steinbrenner paid for dirt about Dave Winfield, Mike Ovitz allegedly said he would send his "foot soldiers up and down Wilshire" to destroy a screenwriter. A celebrity mafioso was just part of the parade. Then the show drew to a close. Gotti turned out to be a bad don whose lapses proved so disastrous that, unlike Trump, Ovitz, Milken and Steinbrenner, he has yet to enjoy a comeback.

The mafioso of the moment is Tony Soprano, a middle-aged, suburban mobster dad with a family and headaches and an SUV that gets lousy mileage. Mobsters used to be guys from the old neighborhood, but Tony is from our neighborhood. We like him for his modern virtues. He's a good boss, a considerate family man, a guy who's getting in touch with his inner feelings. If he's short-tempered, well, haven't we all succumbed to a bout of road rage now and then? And just because he's a killer, who among us doesn't have an issue or two to work on?

The beauty of the mob myth lies in how it has adapted to change. It's a prism through which we view ourselves. We've seen the magisterial mob and the downsized mob, a "Take the cannoli" mob and a "Take the Prozac" mob. And we will keep watching, of course. Who in 2020 won't tune in to see what Meadow Soprano does with her dad's organization?

On Optimism

"I'm only going out for a few minutes. Besides, I'm wearing thermal underwear."—*Genovese crime lieutenant Tony Bender, in the last words spoken to his wife before his 1962 disappearance*

On Popularity

"Senator, I'm the best goddamned lay in the world."
—*Actress Virginia Hill, at Senate hearings, explaining why so many mobsters liked her*

On Regrets, I've Had a Few

"Jesus, I'm sorry to hear that."
— *Vincent "The Chin" Gigante to John Gotti, after Gotti announced his son had become a made member*

"I've learned too late that you need just as good a brain to make a crooked million as an honest million. These days you apply for a license to steal from the public. If I had my time again, I'd make sure I got that license first."
—*Lucky Luciano*

The Principles of Business

"Don't worry, we only kill each other."—*Bugsy Siegel, trying to calm Flamingo builder Del Webb*

On Math

"It was 49, Your Honor."
—*Convicted murderer Richard Pagliarulo at his sentencing, interrupting the judge who'd pegged his body count at 48*

On Being Careful

"I take the Fifth on the horse and the broad."—*Chicago hood Fifi Buccieri, on the rumor that his brother had given a horse to his girlfriend*

On Paying the Consequences

"The guy really pissed me off. When I shot him in the head, his blood spurted all over my car. And I had just washed that goddamn car."— *Anthony "Gas Pipe" Casso*

On Answering to a Higher Authority

"God is a fucking fag."
—*John Gotti*

By Way of Explanation

"I'm going to shoot some pheasants."—*Capone torpedo and avid golfer Sam "Golf Bag" Hunt, explaining to inquisitive lawmen the presence of a shotgun in his golf bag*

On Upholding Appearances

"I'm sorry, counselor. I'd rather blow the goddamned case."
— *Frank Costello, known as the Prime Minister of the Underworld, refusing his attorney's advice that he dress less sharply while on trial*

Quiz For Made Guys

are you ready to join our social club?

1. Bonanno family capo Nicky Marangello was known by three nicknames. Which of these was not among them?
(a) Nicky Glasses. (b) Nicky Cigars. (c) Little Nicky. (d) Nicky the Pooh.

2. In federal prison, boss Vito Genovese gave hit man Joe Valachi a kiss. What happened next?
(a) Nothing. They remained good friends. (b) Joe filed a sex harassment suit. (c) Joe slipped him some tongue. (d) Recognizing the kiss of death, Joe turned informer.

3. Which sentence uses the word fugazy the way a mobster would?
(a) "This diamond is fake. It's a fugazy!" (b) "When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie, that's fugazy." (c) "The secret to my scungilli is that I marinate it in fugazy." (d) "Fugazy inna girl's eyes, maybe later she put out."

4. What mobster is featured in a Bruce Springsteen song?
(a) Phil "Chicken Man" Testa ("Atlantic City"). (b) Pico "Rosalita" della Mirandella ("Rosalita"). (c) Benedetto "Tom Joad" Croce ("Ghost of Tom Joad"). (d) Lorenzo "Dancing in the Dark" Borgia ("Dancing in the Dark").

5. What did mobster Longy Zwillman keep in his wallet?
(a) Ten dollars in mad money for emergencies. (b) His Dick Tracy Junior Crimebusters ID card. (c) A photo of Sinatra. (d) A lock of Jean Harlow's pubic hair.

6. What does a mobster mean when he says he's "bringing both sets"?
(a) His wife and his girlfriend. (b) The books the boss sees and the books the IRS sees. (c) His Callaways and his Pings. (d) Two pinkie rings.

7. When mobsters send a floral arrangement to the funeral of a fellow mobster, what does the ribbon customarily say?
(a) SEE YOU IN HELL. (b) R.I.P., YOU RAT BASTARD. (c) HOW COULD THIS HAVE HAPPENED? (d) OUR PAL.

8. What was the biggest regret of Louis "Two Gun" Alterie?
(a) Not finishing school. (b) Not spending more time with his kids. (c) All those cannoli! (d) When he began packing a third gun, the press did not redub him "Three Gun."

9. Why is Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio referred to as Mafia U.?
(a) It has a fine criminology program. (b) Danny Greene went there. (c) It offers courses in loan-sharking. (d) The school has cooperated with the Witness Protection Program in creating false identities.

10. What does "buckwheats" mean to a mobster?
(a) A good source of fiber. (b) Alfalfa's friend. (c) A commodities scam. (d) Torturing a victim prior to execution.

11. What did Joe Colombo do to Carlo Gambino that Gambino had him hit?
(a) He forgot to send Carlo a Christmas card. (b) He made disparaging remarks about the way Carlo's social club was decorated. (c) He referred to Carlo as "Gam-WEEN-o". (d) He spit in Carlo's face.

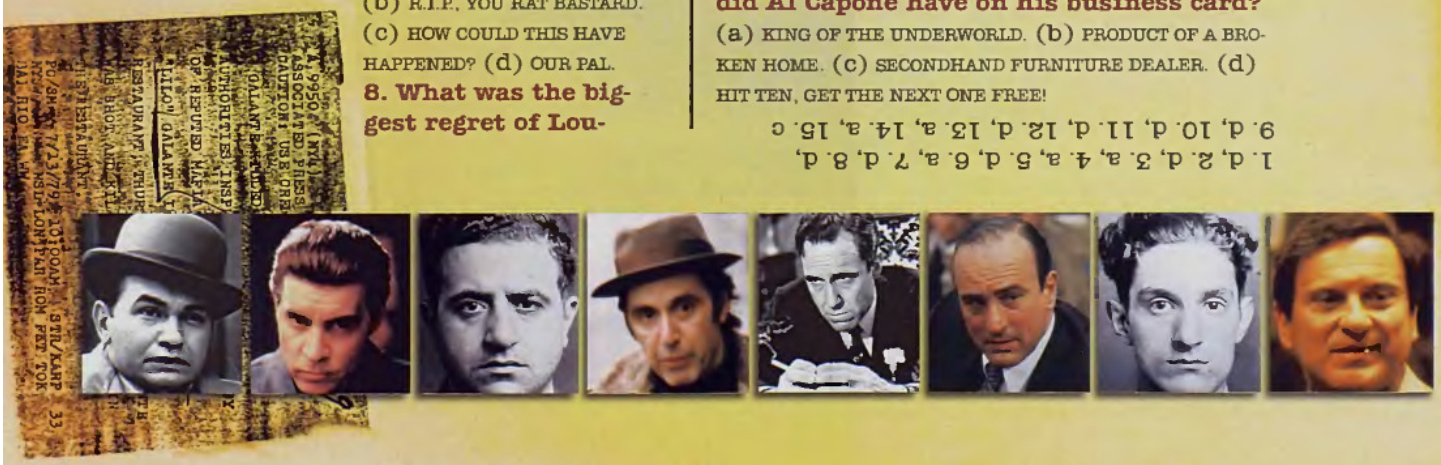
12. What did Godfather Joseph Profaci keep in his basement?
(a) A foosball game. (b) A washer and drier. (c) Meat hooks and a band saw. (d) An altar for family mass.

13. What is the name of this tightly knit West Coast group known for its muscle?
(a) Mickey Mouse Mafia. (b) The Gazpacho Gang. (c) The Starstruck Syndicate. (d) Miramax Films.

14. What does "omertà" mean?
(a) Manliness. (b) Let us pray. (c) Shut up, asshole. (d) Scrambled eggs with roasted peppers and parmesan.

15. What, besides his name and address, did Al Capone have on his business card?
(a) KING OF THE UNDERWORLD. (b) PRODUCT OF A BROKEN HOME. (c) SECONDHAND FURNITURE DEALER. (d) HIT TEN, GET THE NEXT ONE FREE!

1. d, 2. d, 3. a, 4. a, 5. d, 6. a, 7. d, 8. d, 9. d, 10. d, 11. d, 12. d, 13. a, 14. a, 15. c



MOB RECORDINGS

Thanks to the efforts of law enforcement officers, there are now more recordings of mobsters than there are of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Tony Bennett, Vic Damone, Buddy Greco, Jerry Vale, Louis Prima and Jimmy Roselli put together. Here are some hits:

Consigliere Joseph Russo and capo Vincent Ferrara, of the Patriarca crime family of New England, prepare for a secret initiation rite in 1989:

Russo: "OK, we could put some seats over there, and some over there. Christ, these seats take up a lot of fucking space."
Ferrara: "You could put some there."
Russo: "A lot of fucking space. And the food's going to take up a lot of space. What are you putting over there?"
Ferrara: "Ashtrays."
Russo: "Fuck, Vinny, I told you this is a nonsmoking house. I don't want to see any ashtrays. If she smells smoke when she comes back, she's going to have a fit. These guys don't hate me enough, now I'm in charge of this."
Ferrara: "We got to do the best we can, Joe."
Russo: "I know."
Ferrara: "And they're all stupid. What do you care what they think?"
Russo: "Look, I don't want any criticism from anybody in any way, shape or form."

John Gotti, recorded in federal prison in January 1998, speaks to his brother Peter and to his grandson. Gotti encourages the boy to study hard and become a lawyer. The boy says he'd rather be a professional athlete:

Gotti: "To be a good basketball player or baseball player, first of all, you got to be a good liar. A good lowlife and an imbecile. And you got to take steroids! You must take steroids, and anybody who takes steroids is a garbage pail."
Boy: [Softly] "Fine. Then I'll be a crook."
Gotti: "I don't care if you'll be nothin'! You think you're being spiteful with me? You'll get an ass-kicking from me! I know how to raise children!"
[The boy drops his head against his chest.]
Gotti: "You ain't doing me no favor coming to see me and talking sass to me! I will put my foot right up your ass. Don't you look at me like that! I'm more serious than cancer! You can look as sad as you want. Now, give that phone to your uncle and get out of here!"
[The grandson flees the cubicle, head down.]
Gotti: [To his brother] "These visits, I got to keep them to a minimum. When I go back upstairs to my cell, it breaks my heart. Let's try and salvage some of this visit. You know anything good? Anything good anyone wants to talk about?"
Peter: "Not really, everything's normal."
Gotti: "That's perfect. That's terrifying. Normal. Normal in this family is terrifying, that's for sure. Normal in this family is terrifying."

Members of the DeCavalcante family of New Jersey—capo Anthony Rotondo and several soldiers, one of whom is an informant wearing a wire—talking before a sit-down on March 3, 1999:

Joseph "Tin Ear" Sclafani: "Hey, what's this fucking thing 'Sopranos'? What the fuck are they?"
Ralphie [cooperating with the feds]: "You ever watch it?"
Sclafani: "Is that supposed to be us?"
Rotondo: "You're in there. They mentioned your name in there."
Sclafani: "Yeah, what did they say?"
Billy [last name unknown]: "'Watch out for that guy,' they said. 'Watch out for that guy.'"
Rotondo: "Every show you watch. More and more you pick up somebody. Every show."
Sclafani: "Yeah, but it's not me. I'm not even existing over there."
Rotondo: "One week it was Corky. One week it was, well, from the beginning it was Albert G., the guy that died and had stomach cancer."
Billy: "They had the guy die with stomach cancer?"
Sclafani: "Yeah, but where do they get this information from?"
Billy: "I'm telling you. You got to watch."
Sclafani: "So what they say?"
Rotondo: "Aren't they funny? What characters. Great acting."

THE NUMBERS RACKET

3000

Annual interest rate percentage, according to one investigation, charged by a typical Manhattan loan shark.

$400

Net worth, in millions, of Meyer Lansky at the time of his death in 1983.

59

Number of slugs found in the body of Joseph Aiello, Chicago mobster, in 1930. The slugs added more than a pound to Aiello's body weight.

18

Number of putts taken on the sixth green by an upset Sam Giancana when he discovered himself under close personal surveillance by half a dozen FBI agents.

14

Age at which Bugsy Siegel was already heading his own gang.

547

Weight in pounds of Peter "Fat Pete" Chiodo, Lucchese family enforcer. His avoirdupois enabled him to absorb seven bullets from a hit man and live.

5

Cost, in cents, of a bunch of parsley to restaurant owners in Manhattan in the early Eighties.

40

Cost, in cents, after the Mafia got control of the parsley market. Remarkably, in defiance of the law of supply and demand, restaurant owners increased their orders.

1

Number of dollars received by bandleader Tommy Dorsey for releasing Frank Sinatra from his contract, after the intercession of mobster Willie Moretti.

$1.2 million

Amount per year the World Trade Center paid to a mafia-connected trash hauler.

$150,000

Amount paid when a legitimate businessman replaced him.

MAFIA MAN

New York attorney Lou Diamond estimates that he has handled more than 10,000 criminal cases during his career. Among his clients have been bosses, acting bosses, underbosses and consiglieri.

What's the best part of representing mobsters?

There is no best part now. Ten or fifteen years ago I would have given you a completely different answer. Then they constituted the most exciting cases a criminal trial lawyer could handle, action at a very high level.

What's been the big change?

Drugs. And the penalties for dealing drugs. Back then, you had higher-quality clients, old-timers who had honor. They didn't give up people. You didn't have everybody looking to become a cooperating witness.

What's the worst part?

Not getting paid. Some of these guys would rather eat their children than pay me. There was a lawyer [*he mentions the name of a well-known attorney*] who had his arm broke a couple years ago. He told everybody it was a mugger trying to get his Rolex. Later it came out Gotti had somebody break his arm because he kept asking for money for court transcripts.

Gee, that makes them seem like cheapskates.

They don't have the money anymore. They're on the run. Look at the crimes they're committing. Acts of desperation. One guy I know, when he got straightened out, he got depressed. He told me, "Before, I was a good earner, made a good living. Now I got this one-way ticket to jail or to the graveyard."

What's the future of organized crime?

The Europeans, particularly the Russians. They're like the Sicilians who came over at the turn of the century in that they're hard and ruthless. But they're also very sophisticated and well financed.

Is "The Sopranos" realistic?

Absolutely. If anything, they haven't shown how hilarious the really stupid stuff is that they do. Shooting a bakery clerk in the foot over some cannoli? I got that case yesterday. That happens all the time.

THE REAL DEAL

As lovable as mobsters may be, it's important not to forget that deep down, many of these colorful rogues are actually sadists of the most vicious sort. TONY SPILOTRO, Chicago's man in Vegas, once crushed a man's head in a vise until his eyes popped out. RICCARDO "RICHIE THE BOOT" BOIARDO, a legend in the Lucchese family, maintained a crematorium on his New Jersey property where he sometimes roasted his victims alive. The kill-happy members of the DeMeo crew would pop victims then hang their corpses in the shower until the blood drained out; they became so bloodthirsty Big Paulie Castellano had to have them killed. WILLIAM "ACTION" JACKSON, a 300-pound bag man from Chicago who was suspected of being a stoolie, was hanged for two days by his chained feet from a meat hook by Mad Sam DeStefano. He'd been beaten, shot, carved with a razor and burned with a blowtorch; a fed bug caught one of his killers gleefully reminiscing about the ordeal, regretting only that he died too soon. Finally, consider the case of the architect who worked on Gas Pipe Casso's million-dollar home and submitted a $40,000 bill. Gas Pipe dismembered the architect, but not until he worked him over with an acetylene torch and gouged out his eyes with red-hot spoons.

"Thank you, Elly Mae. You've restored my faith in the power of prayer."

318

PLAYBOY'S 2000 BASEBALL PREVIEW

runs score at an awesome

rate. the ball is juiced and

pitchers fear for their lives.

has the national pastime

become a pinball game?

Welcome to arena ball. It's a wild-swinging flurry of grand slams, indoor fireworks, four-hour slow-pitch blowouts and line drives ricocheting off gun-shy pitchers. Every team calls to the bullpen five or six times a game, leaving plenty of opportunities for commercials or nachos. Middle infielders launch moon shots to the opposite field. Excuse-me swings manage to reach what used to be the cheap seats. It's a circus, a comedy, a pinball game.

If you're not from Chicago or Miami or Pittsburgh, you probably never gave Brant Brown much thought. But last June 9 he homered over the right field roof at Tiger Stadium. In 61 years, only 36 home run balls were hit out of the park, nine in the last four years. And no one would confuse Brown with Reggie Jackson: Brant has hit only 40 home runs over four seasons. But his Detroit homer exemplifies what arena ball is all about. For the past five years, balls have rocketed out of big-league parks at an improbable rate. Runs haven't been scored at this rate since the Thirties.

Smaller parks and a shrinking strike zone have played a part, but offense has flourished thanks largely to the jackrabbit ball. The numbers since 1994 prove we're in a new live-ball era. Last year, 2.28 home runs were hit per game, the highest rate ever (the previous record was set in 1996). More runs were scored per game than in any year since 1936.

And pitchers are paying a price. Since 1900, 81 teams have had ERAs of 5.00 or greater. Thirty-three of those teams—41 percent—played in the past six years. In the 20th century, eight teams had ERAs of 6.00 or

sports By Leopold Froehlich and George Hodak

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE BENNY

greater, and two of those teams played in the past four seasons.

One hundred runs batted in used to be a benchmark of a good hitter. Not anymore. Last season, 58 players drove in 100 or more runs. Thirty homers used to mean something, too. In 1992 Fred McGriff led the NL with 35 home runs. Since 1876, 30 or more homers were hit 804 times. More than a quarter of those 30-homer seasons came since 1993. Last season alone, 44 players did it. In baseball history, the 50-homer plateau has been reached 29 times—eight in the past five years.

Arena ball cheapens the accomplishments of Hall of Famers such as Hank Aaron, Roberto Clemente (who never hit 30 homers in a season) and Harmon Killebrew. The Yanks had four players drive in 100 runs or more: the first time that has happened since 1939. Cleveland's Manny Ramirez—the first player with more than 160 RBI in a season since Jimmie Foxx—drove in 165 runs in 147 games.

In May the Rockies scored in every inning of a 13–6 win at Wrigley, tying a major league record. On May 19 at Colorado, hitters grew giddy tallying a record 81 total bases in a 24–12 Reds win. On September 4, Cincinnati hit a record nine home runs in a 22–3 win at Philadelphia (and hit five more the next day). Three days later the Diamondbacks and Brewers used a record-tying 15 pitchers in an 11–9 Arizona victory. How many nachos can one man eat?

Cam Bonifay, general manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates, thinks it's time to do something to help pitchers. "Look at the ball again," he says. "Look at the winding of the ball and the hard cover of the ball. Look at the strike zone. And raise the pitching mound. It will also reduce stress on pitchers' arms." But don't people want to see all this offense? "Changing things might take away the cheap home runs," says Bonifay, "but the big home run hitters are still going to hit them."

•

Atlanta won 103 games last year, despite mediocre seasons from Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine and the absence of Javy Lopez and Andres Galarraga. This season Braves GM John Schuerholz improved his team immensely with a six-player trade with the Padres. The Braves have good young talent. We think it's their turn. The Yankees have been relatively free from injuries the past two seasons. They've won a remarkable 12 straight World Series games. But David Cone and Roger Clemens are now in their late 30s, and Paul O'Neill and Tino Martinez are showing signs of age. Only three teams—the 1936–39 Yankees, the 1949–53 Yankees and the 1972–74 Athletics—won more than two straight Series. We don't think the Yankees will pull off a threepeat. The Indians, obviously, will take the AL Central, though Kansas City and Chicago show signs of life. The two western divisions are tough to call. Arizona has enough pitching to hold off the Giants and Dodgers in the NL West. In the AL West, three teams—Texas, Oakland and Seattle—have a legitimate shot at winning. On the strength of the Rangers' retooled pitching rotation, Texas should prevail. Look for the A's to get the AL wild-card slot. The NL Central is a lot tougher to call than it was a year ago. Houston's improved outfield and solid pitching should carry them to the NL division title. With the addition of Ken Griffey Jr., the Reds have enough to edge the Mets and Cards for the wild

(continued on page 142)

PLAYBOY'S PICKS

American League

East	Central	West
Yankees	Indians	Rangers
Red Sox	White Sox	Athletics
Blue Jays	Royals	Mariners
Orioles	Tigers	Angels
Devil Rays	Twins	

National League

East	Central	West
Braves	Astros	Diamondbacks
Mets	Reds	Giants
Phillies	Cardinals	Dodgers
Expos	Pirates	Rockies
Marlins	Cubs	Padres
	Brewers	

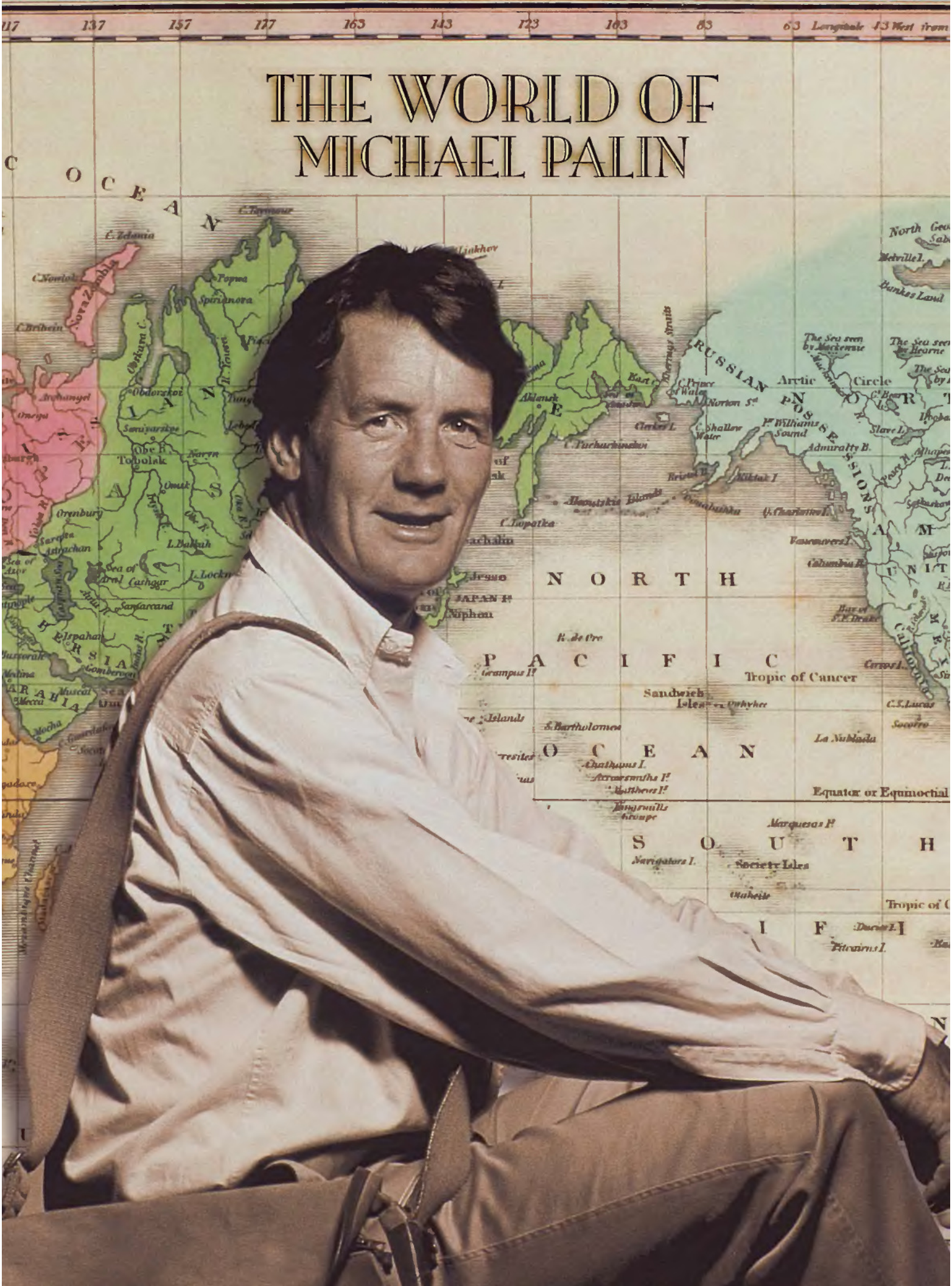
AL Wild Card: **Athletics**
AL Champs: **Yankees**

NL Wild Card: **Reds**
NL Champs: **Braves**

WORLD CHAMPS: BRAVES

"Your tests show possible signs of nymphomania."

THE WORLD OF MICHAEL PALIN



Michael Palin

the witty world traveler on hemingway, eating bulls' balls and appreciating english sex scandals

We first appreciated Michael Palin as a founder of Monty Python's Flying Circus, the satirical troupe that became one of Britain's most notable exports of the early Seventies. Films followed, in which the Pythons took aim at the Age of Chivalry (Monty Python and the Holy Grail) and Jesus (Life of Brian). Palin has appeared without the Pythons, in A Fish Called Wanda and Fierce Creatures. But he has also given himself wide latitude—and longitude. He's made extensive use of his passport, devising, in British parlance, such television series as Around the World in 80 Days (Palin follows Phileas Fogg), Pole to Pole (Palin follows a meridian) and Full Circle With Michael Palin (he follows the shores of the Pacific Ocean). His reporting from places both familiar and exotic can best be described as English. In his 1999 project, Michael Palin's Hemingway Adventure, he stalks the writer across three continents to re-create the man's nonliterary pursuits.

Contributing Editor Warren Kalbacker chatted up Palin on a recent afternoon. Kalbacker's report: "I found a man who seemed content to be back in London, if only for a moment, before departing for some remote destination. But fellow Pythons are never far from his thoughts. Palin told me he lives just down the hill from Terry Gilliam, though in 'somewhat less commodious quarters.' He injected only one note of uncertainty into our conversation: The whereabouts of John Cleese were not currently known."

1

PLAYBOY: Assess the state of the United Kingdom at the start of the millennium.

PALIN: We are still recovering, not from the last century but from the one before that. The roots of our problems lie in the great days of the Empire, when we were really rich and powerful. The decline began around the 1890s. By the time Queen Victoria died, Germany was overtaking us in industrial output. America was already way ahead. The Empire lasted into my lifetime. I was born in 1943, and for the first 15 years of my life, we had an Empire. And then it suddenly disappeared. We just sort of gave it all away. Cravenly. The last 30 or 40 years have been really complicated; we've been totally at sea. We are an industrial power, but we're probably producing less than South Korea. We don't send out many missionaries anymore. We still make Jaguar cars. But we make them for Ford. It's tricky times; I've got a feeling it might be Britain's Swedish century. We'll become a sensible country, making sensible things and trying to do sensible things in foreign policy. The last century has been the century of confusion, and during this next century we may become more Scandinavian.

2

PLAYBOY: What do you think the Queen was thinking when she locked arms with Prime Minister Tony Blair on New Year's Eve?

PALIN: I think she was thinking, Why have I never learned to cross my arms like everybody else? It might be a lack of physical coordination. The Queen is not a touchy-feely person. She is not allowed to touch people. They are not allowed to touch her, which is ridiculous in this day and age. When you're in her company, you're not permitted to ask a direct question, like, "Will you stop standing on my foot?"

3

PLAYBOY: Can you set *Monty Python's Flying Circus* in the larger context of English humor?

PALIN: Probably not, but I'll have a crack. If I ramble, just press the electrode and I will twitch to a halt. *Python* came from two strands. One was the surreal comic strand, which includes people like Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll and even Hilaire Belloc, and the other was the satirical tradition, which goes back to Shakespeare and Jonathan Swift. University comedy, political satirical comedy, had been dormant for the first part of the 20th century, when people were either killing or being killed and economies were failing. That wasn't a jolly time. When we got through the war and we'd all grown fat on American milk and bread and orange juice, we felt the time had come to laugh at those who were supposed to be telling us what to do. Everything I was brought up with always had something going wrong with it, whether it was the distribution of food, medical help or the army or whatever. There was always something that didn't quite work. But at the same time the semblance of authority was strong. There were people who believed and insisted that they knew exactly what was right for those of us who could see that things weren't working. That was irresistible to someone with a comic sense of the world. In Britain, we're always happiest when we can laugh and grumble at the same time.

4

PLAYBOY: What is it with Englishmen and lingerie?

PALIN: I've always been interested in lingerie, as have most red-blooded lads of my age. Vladimir Nabokov was very good on underwear; read *Lolita*. His description of watching Lolita play tennis, of the skirt lifting—that's wonderfully written. So it's not an entirely English obsession. There may possibly be an English obsession with wearing it if you're not a woman.

5

PLAYBOY: Your interest in Roman Catholic affairs dates back at least to Monty Python's treatment of the Inquisition. What do you feel are the implications for Catholicism if an Englishman succeeds the current Polish pope?

PALIN: There *(continued on page 140)*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLIVE ARROWSMITH

STRAPPED

FIVE SPORTS TICKERS THAT ARE HIP AND PRECISE AND PERFORM SLICK ATHLETIC TRICKS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES IMBROGNO
WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 166.
ONLINE, TRY EDITORSPICKS.PLAYBOY.COM

Sports watches are like SUVs: People buy them because they look cool but rarely use them for their intended purpose. But if you're a skier who wants to know when the temperature dips below zero or a runner interested in tracking your 10K times, a sports watch will get the job done. They also keep great time—wet or dry. Clockwise from top left: Casio's DW004B-9V G-Shock offers all the benefits of a digital watch—alarm, countdown timer, stopwatch, etc. Seiko's AirPro digital chronograph counts up to 99 lap times and feotures a wrist strap that inflates to provide a custom fit ($100). The red LCD and futuristic design of Spoon's RedEye have made the multifunction athletic watch a Hollywood status symbol ($110). A sensor in Nike's Ambient Frozen can be programmed to sound off when the temperature hits a designated number ($90). The Full Immersion Chronograph features a trio of subdiols for lap counting, as well as three interchangeable rubber wristbands ($295).

DOUBLE TROUBLE

the bentley twins have taught hef a thing or two about sharing

When Sandy and Mandy Bentley got a phone call from Hugh M. Hefner in the summer of 1998, they both thought it was a joke. The twins, from a conservative Catholic family in Joliet, Illinois, had met PLAYBOY's Editor-in-Chief a few weeks earlier in Los Angeles, when they were dancing late one night at the Garden of Eden nightclub. Introduced to Hef by Playmate of the Year Heather Kozar, they had sat on the arms of his chair and chatted with him briefly—but they'd also gotten nervous, excused themselves to go to the ladies' room and made a quick exit. So when Sandy went back to school in Las Vegas and then heard that Hef was trying to track her down, she figured friends were playing a practical joke on her. And when she subsequently phoned Mandy in Joliet and told her that they had a gentleman caller, Mandy didn't buy it either. "Sandy said, 'You'll never believe who's on the phone,'" says Mandy. "When she

"It's more like a family than anything else," says Sandy of the twins' relationship with Hef. "I never feel like girlfriend number one or two or three—it's just that we're all best friends, and we love to spend time together."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA

No Smoking

said Hugh Hefner, I said, 'Sure, and I'm the queen of England.'"

The British throne may not be in their future, but Sandy and Mandy Bentley have become royalty on the grounds of the Playboy Mansion and in the clubs of LA. Along with Brande Roderick and Jessica Paisley, they're part of the head-turning quartet that shares Hef's life, and his bed. "It was a growing friendship for a long time," Sandy says of the unusual relationship. "We took it very, very slow, and it just grew. You wouldn't think he would like so many of the same things we do, like sitting in bed and watching a Disney cartoon. Maybe being from the Midwest has a lot to do with it." Adds Mandy, "To me, Hef's just the guy with strawberry ice cream on his face every night. We make up names and goof around with him, and it feels so normal. The shock value just isn't there anymore."

While the relationship has catapulted the 22-year-old twins into the spotlight—and now into the pages of PLAYBOY—it hasn't changed their ambitions. Sandy still attends college in Las Vegas, where she's studying psychology; Mandy wants to pursue modeling and acting in Los Angeles, but also plans to complete her college education. Tops on their agenda at the moment, though, is having fun, enjoying their new opportunities—and most of all, doing it together. "We used to have a bit of sibling rivalry," says Sandy. "But as we've grown older, I've realized she's the one constant I have in my life, the one person I can rely on no matter what. And now we're the closest we've ever been. She's more than a twin or a sister—Mandy's my best friend in the whole world."

If you can't tell the twins apart, don't worry: Only their closest friends can. But whatever you do, don't let them know you're confused. "We love to fool people," says Sandy. "If you make the mistake of saying you can't tell the difference between us, we're definitely going to make it as hard on you as possible."

"I loved the photo shoot," says Mandy about posing for PLAYBOY. "The first time Stephen Wayda asked if we could take off our robes, I think Sandy was a little nervous. But I felt like, Whoo, let's go!"

Michael Palin

(continued from page 127)

may be implications for the English tourist industry. This is what we must think about. There is a lot of it's-our-turnism going around at the moment. It's like who hosts the next World Cup championships. I don't think an English pope is likely to happen. We had our turn and we fucked it with Thomas More.

6

PLAYBOY: In the 19th century, people discussed whether or not God is an Englishman. Care to comment?

PALIN: It would be awful because he'd probably be an Englishman you really don't want to meet at all, and I like the idea of God being somewhat amorphous and having a little bit of everything. The God I have in mind, and I often have a God in mind, is far more international and possibly situated so far out in space that you can't distinguish any national characteristic at all. God may well be an asteroid.

7

PLAYBOY: English politicians carry off sex scandals so well. What can American officials learn from them?

PALIN: You couldn't really say that the Americans are dull on these matters, especially after the past year. But they've got to be slightly more elaborate and idiosyncratic. The English sex scandal is much more intriguing. It's not sensible; it's like a very strange detective story. The man who was about to run the new assembly for Wales walked into a police station saying he'd been robbed by a man he'd met on Clapham Common. Which is really a bizarre story. What was he doing walking on Clapham Common? Oh, he just happened to be there, happened to talk to this man, and the man asked him home for tea. And then suddenly he couldn't remember anything else and all his belongings were gone. People started putting two and two together. But it was the fact that he thought he could get away with that somehow. And, of course, it gradually came out that he was in the habit of going to Clapham Common to find male company. But it was the way it was done that was so wonderfully odd and British and complicated.

8

PLAYBOY: No nation has mastered the concept of an upper class as well as England. What advice would you give to young American millionaires who might aspire to something more than mansions, well-stocked wine cellars and Land Rovers?

PALIN: They have to learn that all these things are really of no use if you really want to be upper class. Upper class is something that can't really be defined. If you have money, that's one thing. But it's not just money, it's land that's more important, and if it isn't land, then it's which school you go to, or if it is really land, it's over how many generations back that land goes. So you can never pin down the English class system. If you go searching for it, it'll disappear before your very eyes.

9

PLAYBOY: Would you care to respond to those who take umbrage at the number of endangered species you've eaten in your career?

PALIN: All of the things I've done have been part of my work. They've been jobs. I mean it's just something I've had to do, some sort of employment. You're almost obliged to do outrageous things if you're working in comedy. Good comedy is a reaction to authoritarianism, to being told to do something manifestly ridiculous. I think one of the liberating things about travel is that food and health and sanitary facilities in other countries are always very different from what you've just left. You get the chance to eat snake or dog or because it's the only thing to eat in that particular town. If you were to eat it at home, there'd be howls of outrage. But go order lamb in China and they'll say, "You vicious bastard, how could you? What's wrong with our snakes?"

10

PLAYBOY: You're not going to tell us that bulls' testicles taste like chicken, are you?

PALIN: It's hard to compare them with anything else, because when I sampled bulls' testicles they had been cooked several hours before and had gotten rather cold. So I don't think I gave them their best shot. But they were a bit like a slightly aging pâté.

11

PLAYBOY: You've said that you'd be willing to absorb a little punishment while following the trail of Ernest Hemingway. Knowing you attended an English boarding school, just what meaning should we read into that?

PALIN: Eric Idle once said that boarding school made a man of him and it made a man of his wife. At our school we had people delegated to make the rooms even colder. If it was a cold night, some wretched boy would have to get up and open the window. What I meant was I was prepared to go beyond the library or the bookshop in my search for Hemingway so it would not be a purely cerebral experience. If a 700-pound marlin caught on the end of my rod, I would be prepared to pull it in. If ducks had to be shot, then I would be the man to do it. I did actually come away with an injury, which I got while re-creating one of Hemingway's great injuries, when a skylight fell on his head in March 1928 after he pulled the wrong cord in the bathroom, thinking it was the flush. We rigged this extremely sophisticated camera, which involved a bungeed camera falling within a foot of the top of my head. It had been wrongly adjusted. The camera whizzed down and whacked me on the head and, in true Hemingway spirit, blood poured out. I ended up having four more stitches than Hemingway. He had nine; I had 13. Brilliantly done. Unfortunately, you can't see my scar at all. It says a lot about who looks after you in the hospital and how far stitching has come in the intervening years. Hemingway's remained on his head for the rest of his life. It was a huge scar.

12

PLAYBOY: Are we as a species, particularly the males, staring far too much at our computer screens, thereby endangering our ability to enjoy hard drinking, hard living and hard play?

PALIN: Virtual reality is probably mopping up a lot of real experience. It's to our detriment as human beings. I'm a great believer in bars and cafés and places where people just get together for a drink, and it doesn't happen nearly as much as it used to. Drinking that involves talking is good. Drinking that involves head banging is not so good. And I think people's tolerance of the sort of loud, drunken behavior that Hemingway occasionally indulged in is probably less than it used to be. I was rather impressed by the fact that most people say Hemingway drank enormous amounts. People rarely saw him drunk. It was part of his life, and he absorbed it and was able to write through it. He felt it helped him. It wasn't something he felt guilty about.

13

PLAYBOY: What does a mild-mannered Englishman find so fascinating about a hard-living American writer? Would it be the man's prose, by any chance?

PALIN: I certainly admire his early writing and his persistence in getting it right. What I like about Hemingway is a certain directness: "Look at me. This is what I'm going to be." This is a man who is happy to be judged on what he writes and the way he is and his life and all that. And I suppose, yes, it is the opposite of an Englishman, about whom

(continued on page 172)

"We were told we'd be trapped between floors for at least 30 minutes before help could arrive."

BASEBALL PREVIEW

(continued from page 124)

card. Who will be the AL MVP? How about Derek Jeter? In the NL, we'll go with Jeff Bagwell, who will enjoy hitting in Enron Field.

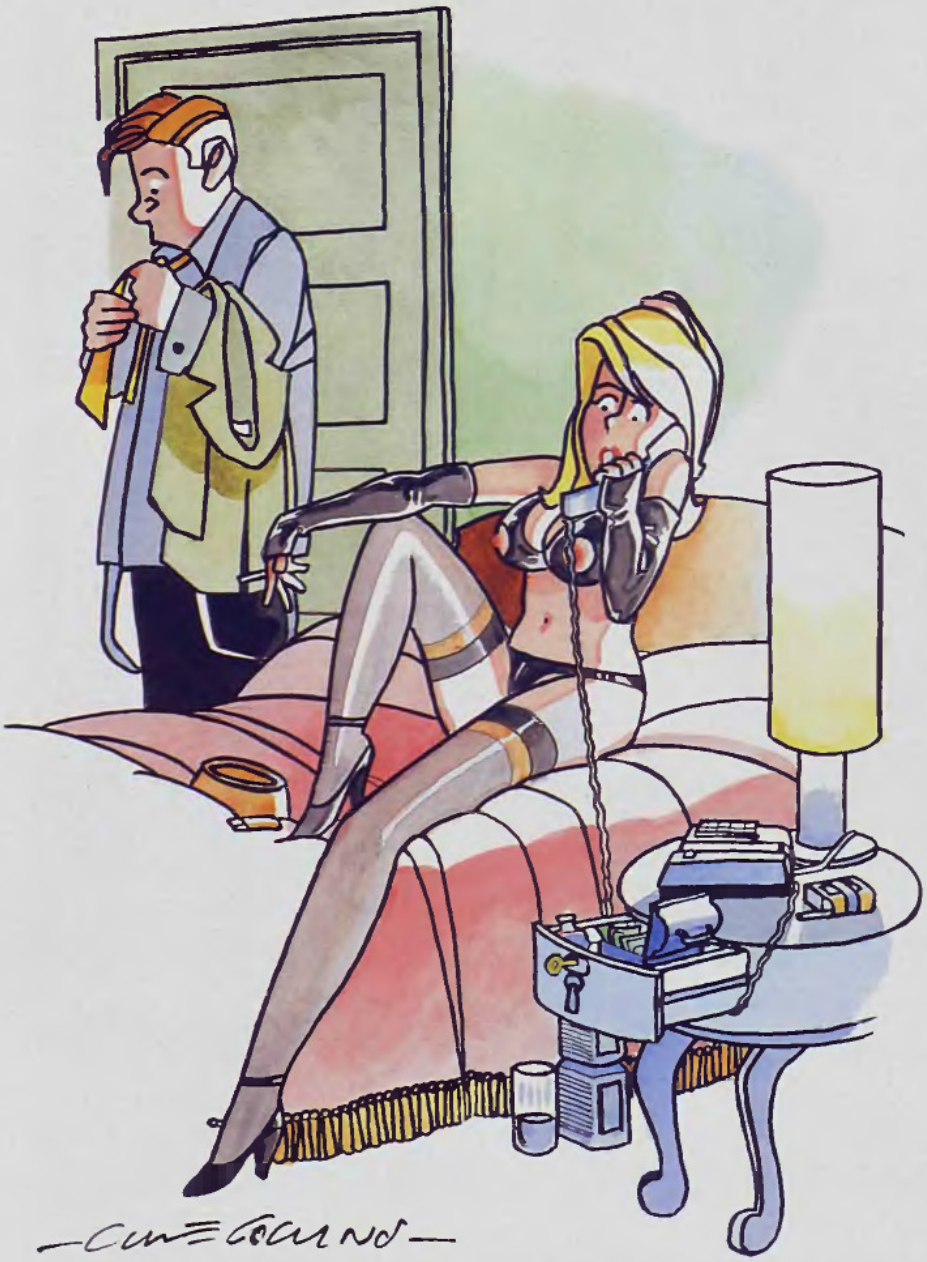
AMERICAN LEAGUE EAST

When Tampa Bay's John Flaherty drove in Fred McGriff in the ninth inning at Yankee Stadium on July 21, Mariano Rivera was finished giving up runs for 1999. Of the 62 first batters Rivera faced coming out of the bullpen last season, three got hits. Of the 27 runners he inherited, he allowed only five to score. But Rivera—who broke three of Ryan Klesko's bats in one at-bat in the final game of the World Series—isn't the only Bronx star. Derek Jeter hit .349 and scored 134 runs and was rewarded this winter with a $10 million contract. Bernie Williams hit .342 and drove in 115. Ricky Ledee will become the **Yankees'** best left fielder since Dave Winfield. The Yanks' starting rotation, with Orlando Hernandez, Roger Clemens and the AL's best home pitcher, David Cone, still has mettle. Lefty Ed Yarnall—who the Yankees robbed from the Marlins—will most likely be the fifth starter. Joe Torre has become one of the game's best managers. No wonder the Yankees play like gangbusters in prime time, going 22–3 in the past two postseasons. In the past four Octobers, the Yankees are 35–10, which is tough to do even against the Twins. If the Yanks are getting a bit gray in certain positions, they're stocked with minor-leaguers. There's awesome young talent in first baseman Nick Johnson and shortstop Alfonso Soriano. If the team avoids injuries again, Gotham will host another World Series.

Who allowed the fewest runs in the American League in 1999? Boston, of course. The **Red Sox** also gave up the least walks and had the most strikeouts in the league. But Boston's pitchers were backed by the worst infield in the bigs. With Jose Offerman and Mike Stanley leading the way, the Bosox had the second-fewest fielding chances and were the worst at turning the double play. Jason Varitek will become a good catcher, but Boston was last in the majors with 31 passed balls last year. And AL batting champ Nomar Garciaparra shouldn't remind anyone of Mark Belanger. With Pedro Martinez at the top, pitching remains Boston's strong suit. The acquisition of Carl Everett from Houston gives Boston its best center fielder since Fred Lynn. But there are signs of trouble in Beantown: Tom Gordon will miss the season with an elbow injury. Bret Saberhagen is out until the break, and Ramon Martinez is still a question mark. Jimy Williams was a genius as manager last year—the Red Sox were the best pinch-hitting team in the AL—but the Bostons are due for a return to earth.

Even though star Shawn Green was traded to Los Angeles, the Toronto **Blue Jays** still have a formidable lineup with Shannon Stewart (perhaps the league's best leadoff batter), Carlos Delgado (44 HRs and 134 RBI), former Dodger Raul Mondesi and surprising young second baseman Homer Bush (.320 and 32 SBs). (Why does Delgado, who led the AL in errors at first base, play in the field, and David Segui, a great gloveman, appear as DH?) Jose Cruz Jr.—who played well in winter ball—will get another shot in center, but only because Vernon Wells (who hit .334 in the minors last year) benefits from a full year in Triple A. Shortstop Tony Batista has the greatest batting stance in the majors. He also hit more homers (31) last season than Derek Jeter or Nomar Garciaparra. This year he'll probably move to third. The pen is shaky. Billy Koch is impressive but young, and Lance Painter and Paul Quantrill don't inspire confidence. With Joey Hamilton and Chris Carpenter coming off surgery, the rotation could also be a problem. If the Jays don't get off to a fast start, look for an early trade of either David Wells or shortstop Alex Gonzalez.

The **Orioles** go into the 2000 season with one of the league's oldest lineups and biggest payrolls—and little hope of contending in the East. Owner Peter Angelos quashed what faint chance the Orioles had when he backed away from signing free-agent pitcher Aaron Sele. The starting staff, led by Mike Mussina



"Yes, Mother, I'm fine and I have a job, and no, I'm not hanging around in bed all day doing nothing."

(who the O's must re-sign), Scott Erickson and Sidney Ponson, will be the team's strength, but it's not good enough to carry an aging lineup. Albert Belle should put up better numbers this year, but graybeards Brady Anderson, Cal Ripken, Mike Bordick and B.J. Surhoff aren't likely to match last year's output. The O's need to start rebuilding, but they're hemmed in by long-term contracts. Prospects Jerry Hairston, Cal Pickering, Gene Kingsale and Matt Riley should get good looks this year. And with seven of the top 50 picks in last summer's amateur draft, Baltimore will soon have more talent in the pipeline.

Stung by a 33 percent drop in attendance, the **Devil Rays** got busy. They brought in two big boppers, Vinny Castilla and Greg Vaughn (who combined for 78 HRs and 220 RBI last season), and a leadoff hitter in ex-Brave Gerald Williams. Castilla and Vaughn will team with Fred McGriff and Jose Canseco to form an indoor murderer's row—as long as Canseco's not in a body cast by June, Vaughn's gimpy knees hold up on the turf and Castilla's bat has pop at sea level. The Rays also added Juan Guzman and Steve Trachsel to shore up a rotation that had the third-highest ERA in the league last season. Tampa has a strong pen, anchored by Roberto Hernandez (who converted 43 of 47 save opportunities). The Rays will make a lot of highlight reels, but they'll be

In Defense of Pete Rose

By Bill James There are four things wrong with baseball's ban on Pete Rose.

First, on the specific charge of betting on baseball: The case against Rose is nowhere near as strong as baseball believes it to be. Second, even if it could prove that Rose had bet on baseball, it wouldn't justify a ten-year suspension, let alone a lifetime ban. Third, major league baseball's handling of the investigation, even if Rose is guilty, has been unseemly, arrogant and disrespectful. And fourth, baseball refuses to acknowledge that it has an obligation to live up to the agreement signed by Commissioner Bart Giamatti.

The argument has hung on the issue of whether Rose did or did not bet on baseball. Rose insists he didn't, major league baseball says he did. People can argue about this issue without end.

Major league baseball's top officials now refuse to discuss the details of the Rose case, for good reason: They don't have the slightest idea what the details of the case are. Former Exalted High Commissioner Fay Vincent gave an interview on the subject in December and wound up saying the Dowd report clearly proved things that, in fact, it never even suggested.

Pete Rose lives his life the same way Frank Sinatra lived his, except crudely. In the late Eighties Rose was associating with enough ne'er-do-wells to stock an Elmore Leonard novel, a Clinton campaign and two episodes of *Jerry Springer*. John Dowd, assigned to investigate Rose's life to see if he could catch him doing anything wrong, thought that would be too easy. Rose was obviously going to be suspended from baseball for something, but what? Dowd wanted it to be for betting on baseball games. Professional pride. No cherry-picking for John Dowd, by God. He was going to prove everything on the board.

Dowd and Rose went head-to-head. Dowd was a moderately clever lawyer, while Rose had shot his credibility early in the battle by telling a number of whoppers—irrelevant whoppers on issues that were none of Dowd's business. Still, Dowd won. He convinced the men who ran major league baseball that there was overwhelming evidence that Rose had bet on baseball.

There isn't any such evidence—there never was and there never will be. Dowd took a picture of a kitty cat, touched it up and sold it as a lion. But Rose had to cut a deal of some kind, and, against the advice of his lawyers, he agreed not to sue baseball as a part

Which way to Cooperstown? Pete Rose leaves the courthouse in Cincinnati in July 1990 after being sentenced to five months in federal prison for filing false income tax returns.

of that deal. This was as smart as most of the other things that Rose did in the late Eighties. He trusted his future to the goodwill of Bart Giamatti. That bridge blew up on him the moment he drove over it.

People who believe Pete Rose must be guilty because he agreed to the deal probably believe O.J. Simpson is innocent because he was found not guilty. Nobody claims Rose is the Virgin Mary—hell, nobody claims Rose is Michael J. Fox.

But if Rose can somehow get past the issue of did he or didn't he BOB, the points of contention that lie beyond are more in his favor. Assuming the worst, what is a reasonable punishment for betting on baseball? Baseball portrays its action against Rose as consistent with a long history of actions against players involved in gambling. In reality, no player in the history of sports has ever been suspended for more than one year for simply betting on games. Paul Hornung and some other guys bet on football games in the early Sixties. They were suspended for one year. Football survived.

The ten-year-plus suspension of Rose for allegedly betting on baseball is a triumph of self-righteousness over common sense. It is hard to imagine what the rationale would be for such a policy; it is hard to imagine it would be legal. If the entertainment industry had organized itself in 1960 to ban Frank Sinatra from ever working again, would that have been a good thing? The goal of punishment is not to establish our moral superiority but to make it clear that certain activities will not be tolerated. That point seems to have been made. If Rose had been readmitted to the game five years ago, who would have said, "Rose only got five years for betting on baseball. Maybe I should try it"?

This was the basis of the public outpouring when Rose was introduced at the 1999 World Series. The fans weren't roaring that Rose was innocent or that the evidence wasn't convincing; the average fan probably knows even less about the evidence in the Dowd report than Fay Vincent does. The message in the Atlanta night was "Enough is enough. Give the man a break."

The agreement that Rose signed with major league baseball states:

(1) Nothing in this agreement shall be deemed an admission that Rose bet on baseball.

(2) The commissioner will not make any formal findings or determinations on the allegation that Rose bet on baseball.

(3) Rose will wait one year before he applies for readmission.

Baseball owes Pete Rose what it promised him in that agreement: a hearing for reinstatement, with no assumption he bet on baseball. If he gets that hearing, he'll win reinstatement. If he doesn't get it, some lawyer will eventually find a way to get the issue before a judge, at which point baseball will have its ass handed to it in a briefcase. It isn't in anybody's interest to go there.

hard-pressed to get out of the basement in a tough division.

AMERICAN LEAGUE CENTRAL

Time is running out for **Indians** general manager John Hart. Manny Ramirez has one season left on his contract, and key players—Sandy Alomar, Kenny Lofton, Dave Justice, Travis Fryman—are closer to their pensions. The Tribe can definitely hit: The team scored 1009 runs last season, the most since Boston scored 1027 in 1950. New manager Charlie Manuel will inspire his players in a way Mike Hargrove couldn't. But the problem is pitching, as Cleveland's postseason debacle showed. Chuck Finley and Cuban newcomer Danys Baez will help, but Jaret Wright has moved backward since 1997. Now that Mike Jackson and his 39 saves have departed for Philadelphia, the key to the Indians' chances will be the bullpen health of Paul Shuey (who has converted only 19 of 32 save opportunities in his career) and Steve Karsay (who has only one career save) and a return to form by Ricardo Rincon. (Also keep an eye on rookie relievers Sean DePaula and David Riske.) New owner Larry Dolan is willing to spend to field a winner, but can Hart resist the temptation to swap young talent for veteran mediocrity?

"The Kids Can Play" was the **White Sox'** marketing slogan, but the kids weren't good in the field (they committed a league-high 136 errors) and weren't patient at the plate (they drew the second-fewest walks in the league). On the plus side, Chicago got a breakout year from right fielder Magglio Ordonez (.301, 30 HRs, 117 RBI) and surprising contributions from catcher Brook Fordyce and rookie outfielders Chris Singleton and Carlos Lee. First baseman Paul Konerko (.294, 24 HRs) and second sacker Ray Durham fill out a decent lineup that needs help on the left side of the infield and a boost from the Slugger Formerly Known as the Big Hurt, Frank Thomas (who hasn't dished out much pain the past two seasons). Mike Sirotka and Jim Parque head a rotation that could soon be among the AL's best. Young hurler Kip Wells looks like a future ace, and talented prospects Aaron Myette and Jon Garland aren't far behind. The bullpen is sturdy with Keith Foulke (who allowed 72 hits in 105⅓ innings), Bill Simas, Sean Lowe and Bobby Howry. With an impressive young nucleus and a deep farm system, the Sox may soon get the Indians' attention.

Despite losing their top two hitters (Dean Palmer and Jose Offerman) to free agency, the **Royals** were one of the AL's better-hitting teams in 1999. Kansas City's .282 team batting average, which matched that of the Yankees, was third best in the league, and the club set a franchise record for runs scored. But offensive prowess wasn't enough to save the Royals from their worst record in team history. KC was done in by a thin rotation and a bullpen that tallied more blown saves (30) than saves (29). (The Royals lost 25 games in which they had a lead or were tied in the seventh inning.) Off-season additions Jerry Spradlin and Ricky Bottalico will be counted on to prevent another meltdown in the pen, and the Royals will look to Blake Stein and Jay Witasick to strengthen a rotation that is good at the top with Jose Rosado and Jeff Suppan. KC boasts a deep and talented outfield that features Rookie of the Year Carlos Beltran (.293, 22 HRs, 108 RBI), Jermaine Dye (.294, 27 HRs, 119 RBI) and Johnny Damon (.307, 36 SBs). There's talent in the infield as well, with future star Carlos Febles and overachievers Mike Sweeney, Rey Sanchez and Joe Randa. If the pitching staff comes together, the Royals could manage a 20-game improvement this season.

Tigers general manager Randy Smith rolled the dice when he sent six players to the Rangers for two-time MVP Juan Gonzalez. Smith wanted a marquee man to draw fans to Comerica Park, and Gonzalez fit the bill. But the price was steep—among the six dealt were former 15-game-winner Justin Thompson, promising outfielder Gabe Kapler and talented reliever Francisco Cordero. The gamble won't pay off unless Smith persuades Juan Gone to stay put and sign a long-term deal. And even if Gonzalez turns in another MVP season, the Tigers won't make big strides without

A Dugout Chat With Dusty Baker

You may get an argument if you claim Dusty Baker is the best manager in the majors, but virtually everyone will agree that he's baseball's best motivator. His San Francisco Giants had the lowest payroll in the NL West last year, yet finished second. In his seven years with the Giants, Baker has twice been named manager of the year. He is best known for his late-season comebacks and unflappable determination. In his final contract year, Baker will attract plenty of interest if the Giants don't lock him up first.

Q: What fundamental skills are most lacking in the big leagues today?

A: I'd say throwing and running.

Q: At what point in a season do you realize you're managing a team that can contend? How long does it take you to assess your team?

A: One time through the league, where you can compare your team with all the other teams and see what your strengths and weaknesses are versus another team's strengths and weaknesses.

Q: Have you ever guessed wrong about your team's prospects? Were you ever in spring training and thought your team would go nowhere and it ended up being a good team?

A: Yeah, there have been times when I was wrong. But spring training is a little too early to assess the team unless you basically have the same one you had the year before.

Q: What's your least favorite park to visit as a manager?

A: Probably Colorado. It's hard to manage there. You don't know when to take your pitcher out, you don't know when to concede the game and save your bullpen for tomorrow. No lead is safe. It's a different game.

Q: Some teams consistently have fewer injuries than others, year in and year out. Is that just dumb luck?

A: Some of it's luck and some of it's research. If you get a guy who's been prone to injury over the past five years, his chances of getting injured again are high. Training and fitness help. Over the past three or four years, the Giants have been in the top three, I think, in the least number of injuries or people on the disabled list. The only problem is, the injuries we've had have been to key people. You lose Barry Bonds or Jeff Kent or Ellis Burks for a couple of months, it hurts. But we've been very fortunate with our pitchers not getting injured or having bad arms. A lot of it is fitness, a lot of it is nutrition and a lot of it's year-round training. When you're a midrange-budget team you have to be in better shape than other teams, because you can't afford to lose guys. You can't afford to go out and replace them.

Q: Who's the best young outfielder in the National League?

A: Either Andruw Jones or Vladimir Guerrero.

Q: And what about the best young pitcher?

A: Probably the kid from Atlanta, Kevin Millwood.

Q: If you could change one baseball rule, what would it be?

A: The knockdown rule. I would like both pitchers to get a shot. Stop fighting and charging the mound and let them fight like hockey players. Then you'll see who really wants to fight and who's afraid of getting embarrassed or who wants to be stopped.

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better years from outfielders Juan Encarnacion and Bobby Higginson and infielders Tony Clark and Damion Easley. Detroit, which drew the fewest walks in the league last year, will also have to improve on a dismal .243 average with runners in scoring position and a woeful .326 on-base average. The rotation, which had a league-high 5.57 ERA in 1999, will fare slightly better in a more spacious park and should get a lift from Hideo Nomo, who went 12–8 with the Brewers in 1999. A lot rides on former number one picks Jeff Weaver and Matt Anderson, who both struggled after showing early promise. If Weaver emerges as an ace and Anderson develops into a dominant closer, the Tigers will have something to build on.

Youth was served in Minnesota last season, as the **Twins** played 17 rookies. Most of them belonged in the minors, but owner Carl Pohlad's main concern is keeping the payroll down—and that means play the rookies. While several of the greenhorns showed promise—particularly outfielders Jacque Jones, Chad Allen and Torii Hunter, shortstop Cristian Guzman and third baseman Corey Koskie—there isn't much cause for excitement in the Twin Cities. The starting rotation, led by Brad Radke and future all-star Eric Milton, is pretty good and the pen is serviceable. But the mound corps isn't strong enough to offset an anemic offense that scored the fewest runs in the league last year (even though it plays 81 games in the Baggiedome). And unless Todd Walker and Matt Lawton regain their strokes, the team doesn't figure to be much improved this year.

AMERICAN LEAGUE WEST

After winning three division titles in four years and coming up empty in the postseason, the **Rangers** have taken a new tack. With Juan Gonzalez' big bat now in Detroit and Todd Zeile holding down first for the Mets, the Rangers will make do with a smaller offensive arsenal. Second-year right fielder Gabe Kapler, who came over from the Tigers in the Gonzalez deal, and highly touted center fielder Ruben Mateo will be counted on to pick up some of the slack, as will rookie third baseman Mike Lamb. Rusty Greer (.300, 101 RBI), Rafael Palmeiro (.324, 47 HRs, 148 RBI) and MVP catcher Pudge Rodriguez (.332, 35 HRs, 113 RBI) will anchor a lineup that won't have as much pop as last year's. But the Rangers are banking on an improved rotation, which will feature three new lefties (Kenny Rogers, Darren Oliver and either Justin Thompson or rookie Matt Perisho) and holdovers Rick Helling and Esteban Loaiza, to offset any scoring drop-off. Closer John Wetteland and set-up men Jeff Zimmerman, Tim Crabtree and Francisco Cordero give Texas one of the junior circuit's best pens (if it's not overworked again). If the Rangers can hold off the Athletics and the Mariners, they'll likely run into the Yanks, who have trounced them nine straight times in the postseason. Texas may break the three-and-out habit, but we don't see them advancing to the ALCS.

The **Athletics** had the fifth-best record in the American League last year and were second in the majors in home runs. Jason Giambi had a .315 batting average, Matt Stairs hit 38 homers and John Jaha drove in 111 runs. Randy Velarde even managed to get 200 hits. Yet Oakland isn't mentioned among the elite teams. Maybe that will change. The A's have terrific young players in outfielder Ben Grieve, shortstop Miguel Tejada and third baseman Eric Chavez. They also have a solid rotation with Kevin Appier, future ace Tim Hudson, Gil Heredia (who has the best control in the AL) and Omar Olivares. And they're loaded with strong arms. Three young pitchers—Mark Mulder, Barry Zito and former outfielder Ron Mahay—will vie for the fifth spot. General manager Billy Beane decided to go with a platoon in center that will include phenom Terrence Long, who came over from the Mets in the Kenny Rogers deal. In order to shore up the bullpen, Beane got Jason Isringhausen, who converted all eight of his save opportunities with Oakland last year. Watch for the A's to use third baseman Adam Piatt, who tore up the Texas League last season, as trade bait. If it can handle left-handed pitching, Oakland will make people take notice this year.

The **Mariners** finally succeeded in obtaining what Ken Griffey Jr. has been calling for—a frontline pitching staff. One problem: After 11 seasons in Seattle, Junior will be watching from Cincinnati. It was a tumultuous off-season, in

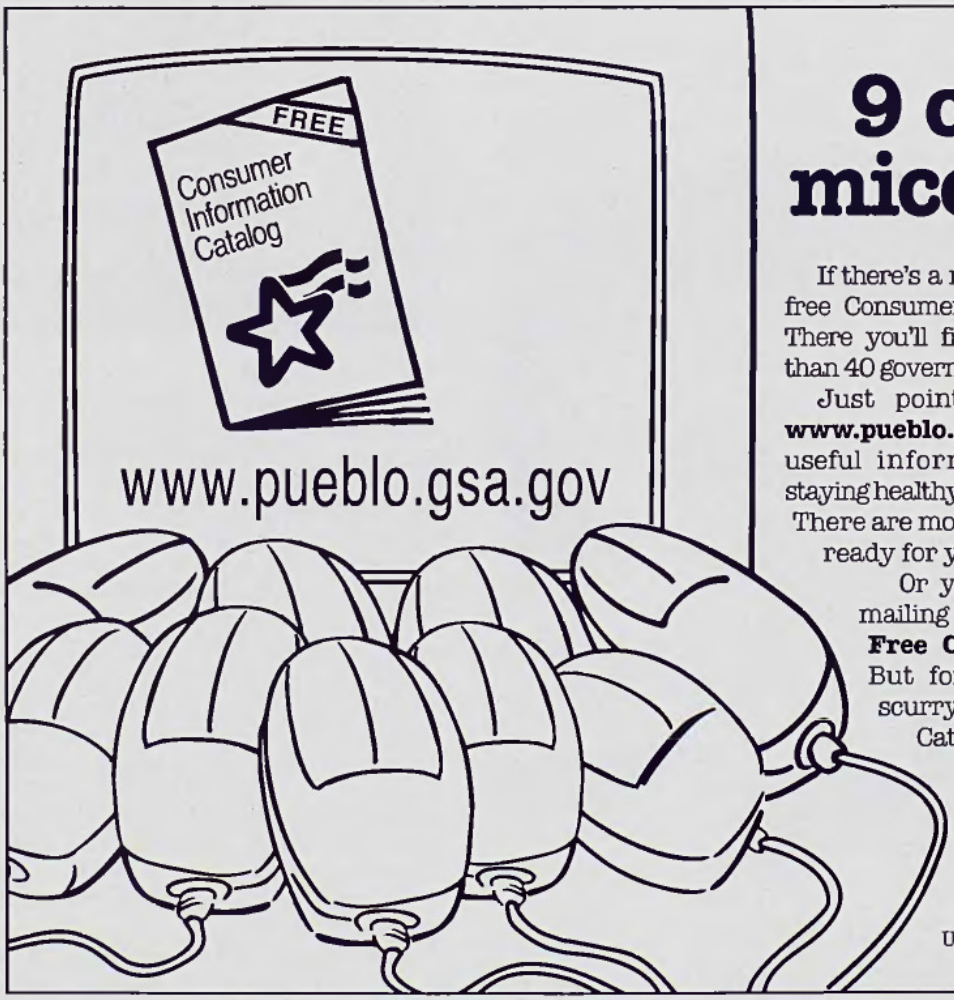
"Gentlemen, third parties are ordinarily a long shot—but not with clones of these guys!"

which Griffey was rumored a hundred times to be traded before he was finally packed off to Ohio for starting pitcher Brett Tomko, center fielder Mike Cameron, infielder Antonio Perez and reliever Jake Meyer. That's not much for a franchise player. But Pat Gillick, who replaced much-maligned Woody Woodward as GM last fall, did sign six free agents for $61 million. The Mariners now have the pitching, with young stars John Halama, 22-year-old Freddy Garcia (who had a 2.97 ERA in the second half), Tomko and 21-year-old Gil Meche (8–4 in 15 starts) filling out a rotation anchored by Jamie Moyer and Aaron Sele. And that's not even counting 6'10" phenom Ryan Anderson, who's a year or so away. It's hard to overestimate the importance of Seattle's improved pitching. Despite moving into a pitcher's park last July (the team ERA dropped from 6.67 in the Kingdome to 4.01 in Safeco), the Mariners set team records for ERA, walks, hits and runs allowed. The M's still look peckish at the plate, even with the addition of John Olerud. Edgar Martinez led the American League with a .447 on-base percentage, but David Bell, Mark McLemore, Dan Wilson and Brian Hunter won't strike fear into pitchers' hearts. The M's are also an old team. Gillick may move a pitcher or two to get an outfielder. The pen, long a sore spot in the Pacific Northwest, is a lot stronger with the addition of Arthur Rhodes and 31-year-old Kazuhiro Sasaki, Japan's all-time saves leader (who comes off elbow surgery). That means Lou Piniella won't have to rely on the incendiary Jose Mesa, who somehow notched 33 saves last year despite allowing 124 base runners in 68⅔ innings. Even with Griffey gone, the Mariners can contend in the AL West.

All signs pointed to a big housecleaning in Anaheim after last year's dreadful last-place debacle. But the shakeout never came, and it looks like Disney has pulled the plug on the Angels. The official line, offered by GM Bill Stoneman, is that the Halos will contend this season. That's hard to believe. Sure, the Angels' offense should get a boost with Mo Vaughn and Tim Salmon healthy again, and more can be expected from Troy Glaus and Darin Erstad. But there are giant holes in the lineup and the rotation looks dicey. Starter Omar Olivares was dealt to Oakland last season and 14-year mainstay Chuck Finley signed with Cleveland. That leaves 34-year-old Ken Hill (4–11, 4.77), who's three pitches away from the DL, and 38-year-old gopherballer Tim Belcher (6–8, 6.73), who's coming off arm surgery and will miss the start of the season. Other possible starters include lackluster signee Kent Mercker, Jason Dickson (who missed all of last season with shoulder trouble) and unproven youngsters Jarrod Washburn, Ramon Ortiz and Brian Cooper—all of whom could be good in time but are sure to take their lumps this year. It's going to be a long summer for new coach Mike Scioscia. A year after being picked by many (including PLAYBOY) to take the West, the Angels look like the weak link in an otherwise strong division.

NATIONAL LEAGUE EAST

How can a team win eight straight division titles and look so lousy in the postseason? The **Braves** hit .223 in the NLCS; in the World Series they batted .200. Atlanta hit .266 during the season and was only seventh in the league in runs scored. Greg Maddux gave up the most hits of his career and had his first plus-3.00-ERA season since 1991. Tom Glavine led the NL in hits allowed. Yet the Braves still won 103 games last year. The Braves' pitching staff remains the envy of the bigs. Kevin Millwood, who was 6–0 with a 1.29 ERA in his last ten starts, held opposing hitters to the lowest batting average in the majors (.202). Bruce Chen will improve on his 5.47 ERA. And there are plenty more arms in the minors: Jason Marquis, Luis Rivera and Jung Bong may be in Atlanta soon. The Braves improved offensively during the winter. Quilvio Veras (.368 on-base percentage in 1999) gives the team a



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(It's the cat's meow.)

U.S. General Services Administration

legitimate leadoff hitter. And Reggie Sanders brings a lot more speed to the lineup. Chipper Jones comes off an MVP season. Andruw Jones, 23, is due for a breakout year. Atlanta's best offensive prospect, George Lombard, was MVP of the Arizona Fall League. The shortstop job may even go to 19-year-old Rafael Furcal. The big issue for Atlanta again will be health: How much will 38-year-old Andres Galarraga contribute after a year away with cancer? How will Javy Lopez rebound from knee surgery? Will Brian Jordan play 153 games again? Will Veras and Sanders be healthy? The Braves' pen, which was the second-best in the league last season, has problems, too. Can John Rocker be effective, especially on the road? How will his act play out in the locker room? Will Kerry Ligtenberg return to his 1998 form? Will Kevin McGlinchey or John Smoltz become the closer? But don't get the wrong impression. This is a superb team. Even with the uncertainties, the Braves have enough talent to win it all.

Whither the **Mets?** Last year they won 97 games and ended their Atlanta jinx. (The fifth and sixth games of the NLCS were hands-down the best of the postseason.) Thanks to 41-year-old Rickey Henderson, the Mets were second in the league in walks, first in on-base percentage and fifth in runs scored. Second baseman Edgardo Alfonzo and third sacker Robin Ventura anchored baseball's best defensive infield. So why does something smell fishy in Flushing? One factor is age. Henderson, Ventura and Todd Zeile (John Olerud's replacement at first) aren't young. The outfield also seems weak. Mets GM Steve Phillips was impressed enough with the play of 28-year-old Melvin Mora that he traded rising star Roger Cedeno. Darryl Hamilton won't hit .339 for the Mets again this season, and Derek Bell looked terrible for Houston in 1999. Mike Hampton—also acquired from the Astros in the Cedeno trade—will be a big plus. But the rotation is still thin and fragile. New York has a good pen, though there are concerns about Armando Benitez. The Mets overachieved in 1999. Unless they add a couple of impact players, they won't repeat last season's success.

The **Phillies** ended 1999 as they did most of the Nineties—on the wrong side of .500. Sound familiar? The overachieving Phils were actually in the wild-card chase until a 10–34 streak in August and September dumped them back on common ground. The team had a 4.92 ERA and only 32 saves, so it isn't hard to figure out where the problem was. GM Ed Wade pulled off a great trade over the winter, getting Andy Ashby from the Padres. But the trade was partly negated by Curt Schilling's shoulder surgery. He'll be out until mid-May. Schilling threw 523 innings in 1997 and 1998, so his sore shoulder is no surprise. After Jeff Brantley went down with his bum shoulder in April, the Phillies' bullpen was a mess. This year Mike Jackson comes to the rescue, but after appearing in more games (644) than any other pitcher in the decade, he may not have much left. With the exception of its disappointing middle infield, the Phillies' offense looks sharp. In Scott Rolen, Bobby Abreu and Pat Burrell, Philadelphia has some of the game's best young talent. Rolen missed a third of the season after he hurt his back sliding in Milwaukee in July. Abreu (.335, 183 hits) had the highest Phillies batting average since 1967. Burrell (.333, 28 HRs in Double A) will challenge Ron Gant in left. Mike Lieberthal and Doug Glanville (204 hits, 101 runs) round out the offense. Unfortunately, the Phils have a tough early schedule. And they're asking a lot from pitchers Paul Byrd (5.61 ERA after the All-Star break), promising Randy Wolf, Robert Person and Chris Brock. It looks like Ed Wade missed his chance to trade Schilling for young pitching. Philadelphia fans might be wondering if the Aughts will look like the Nineties.

Now that former **Expos** president

La Republica del Beisbol

Last season more than one in five big leaguers were born outside the U.S. That's twice the ratio of a decade ago. Sixty-six players came from the Dominican Republic—a nation with a population the size of New Jersey's—where baseball was introduced by Cuban planters in the 19th century. If baseball is the great American pastime, it's a religion in the D.R. And gone, apparently, are the days of the scatter-armed Dominican shortstop or the flaky Dominican reliever. Here's a lineup of current Dominican all-stars that could give the Yanks or Braves a run for their money:

C Tony Eusebio
1B Jose Offerman
2B Carlos Febles
3B Fernando Tatis
SS Neifi Perez
LF Manny Ramirez
CF Vladimir Guerrero
RF Sammy Sosa

SP: Pedro Martinez, Jose Lima, Pedro Astacio, Bartolo Colon, Octavio Dotel
RP: Armando Benitez, Antonio Alfonseca, Jesus Sanchez, Odalis Perez

"Does this change anything with us?"

Claude Brochu has gone off to count his ducats, there's hope again in Montreal. In two days in December, new owner Jeffrey Loria increased his team's payroll nearly 33 percent by signing two former Yankee pitchers. Unfortunately, Montreal signed Graeme Lloyd and Hideki Irabu, hardly Goose Gossage and Catfish Hunter. But Loria may be the start of something good. In Vladimir Guerrero (.316, 42 HRs, 131 RBI), Jose Vidro (.304) and Michael Barrett (.293), the franchise has tremendous young talent. And with solid outfield prospects Peter Bergeron and Milton Bradley, GM Jim Beattie can unload center fielder Rondell White. Closer extraordinaire Ugueth Urbina (who led the NL in saves last season) may also end up elsewhere (Atlanta, anyone?). If manager Felipe Alou improves his defense and gets more speed at the top of his lineup, the Expos will make life miserable for some teams this summer.

Batting Around

Angels leadoff hitter Orlando Palmeiro was ejected on August 4 by umpire Tim Tschida when he dropped his bat at the plate after striking out in the first inning. But Palmeiro wasn't showing up the ump. The Angels were hoping to break out of a slump by using the same bat—in this case Jim Edmonds' black bat—and Palmeiro was just leaving the bat for number two hitter Gary DiSarcina. Once the plan was explained to Tschida, Palmeiro was reinstated. The bat trick? Four of the next eight Angels got hits. Anaheim won 4-3.

The Marlins appropriately ended their 1999 season with an 18–0 loss to Atlanta. Even though the Fish started the season 6–22, their 64–98 record represented a ten-game improvement over 1998. But they remain the worst team in the NL. Florida was last in the league in homers and runs scored, despite signs of an offensive revival. Second baseman Luis Castillo hit .302 and stole 50 bases. Rookie center fielder Preston Wilson, 25, hit 26 homers but struck out 156 times (second-most in the league). Third baseman Mike Lowell had a strong second half. But the hitting still has a long way to go. Oft-injured Cliff Floyd—in seven seasons he has only once had as many as 400 plate appearances—played in just 69 games last year, and Mark Kotsay and Derrek Lee haven't approached their potential at the plate. Florida has a raft of talented pitching prospects in Brad Penny, A.J. Burnett (3.48 ERA in 41 innings), Jason Grilli and Vladimir Nunez (who came from Arizona with Penny and OF phenom Abraham Nunez in the Matt Mantei trade). The bullpen has potential, too, with Braden Looper, Armando Almanza and closer Antonio "Pulpo" Alfonseca (21 saves and a 3.24 ERA), who looked great in the Dominican Winter League. Hang tough, John Henry, the Marlins are on the way up.

NATIONAL LEAGUE CENTRAL

If Walt Weiss hadn't speared Tony Eusebio's bases-loaded drive in the tenth inning of game three of the NL division series, Houston would be heading in another direction. Weiss' play kept the Astros from taking a commanding lead over Atlanta. Rather than moving into a new stadium with a tightened belt, the Astros would be flying a National League pennant or World Series banner. Coming off the franchise's second-best mark, owner Drayton McLane—who says he has lost $120 million since he bought the team in 1992—looked to unload salaries in 2000. Arbitration-eligible Carl Everett went to Boston for shortstop prospect Adam Everett. Rather than risk losing Mike Hampton to free agency, GM Gerry Hunsicker packed him to the Mets for Roger Cedeno and Octavio Dotel. The team may look to unload Moises Alou, but he has a no-trade clause that limits him to just a few teams. Even without Alou, the Astros have an impressive outfield with Cedeno, Daryle Ward, Lance Berkman and Richard Hidalgo. The infield, with Tim Bogar and Ken Caminiti on the left side, isn't as strong. Jose Lima and Shane Reynolds are solid at the top of the rotation. And Dotel and Scott Elarton—who comes off rotator cuff surgery and will miss the start of the season—give Houston two of the best young arms in the game. Venezuelan prospect Wilfredo Rodriguez will help, but probably not this season. Billy Wagner may be the best closer in the NL. The Astros will definitely miss Hampton, but there's still enough here to get them to the playoffs again. Maybe Houston can be more than a two-man offense this time. And maybe Craig Biggio and Jeff Bagwell (who've gone a combined 10-for-81 in the postseason) will hit this October.

Cincinnati general manager Jim Bowden had an advantage with the Ken Griffey trade—Junior insisted he could be sent only to the Reds—but he still pulled off a sweet deal. Without giving up a frontline starter or a top prospect, Bowden landed an all-century player who instantly makes his team a contender in a tough division. Owner Carl Lindner shelled out a bargain $116.5 million to keep Griffey in the Queen City through 2009. With a lineup that boasts Barry

"I'm sure you'll agree that we should put this whole sordid business behind us."

Larkin, Sean Casey and Dante Bichette, the Redlegs will be in the hunt again this year. Small-market teams aren't supposed to be able to compete or sign marquee players. Last year, Cincinnati's youth squad—with an efficient $38 million payroll—managed 96 victories. That turned out to be one win short when the Reds lost their 163rd game 5–0 to the Mets. Led by a great bullpen—with a 3.36 ERA and a major-league-leading 55 saves—the Reds' pitching staff allowed the fewest hits in the majors (they gave up nearly 400 fewer than the Rockies). But manager Jack McKeon will pay this season for a few Faustian bargains he copped last year. Scott Sullivan, Danny Graves (the best pitcher in the majors with runners in scoring position) and NL Rookie of the Year Scott Williamson all carried heavy loads in 1999 and may not throw as well this season. The Reds will need plenty of innings from Denny Neagle and Pete Harnisch. Thanks to Griffey's hometown loyalty, things look sweet in Cincy.

Three straight disappointing seasons for the **Cards** have taken a bit of the shine off manager Tony La Russa's genius tag. But La Russa hasn't had a full deck to work with. Injuries to Alan Benes, Matt Morris and Donovan Osborne left a gaping hole in the rotation, and the Cards haven't had a consistent closer since Dennis Eckersley retired. The pitching corps looks more reliable this year with the arrival of veteran workhorses Pat Hentgen, Darryl Kile and Andy Benes and closer Dave Veres. The Redbirds will count on their new starters to eat up innings (15 wins apiece would be nice, too) and take the load off a bullpen that made a league-high 454 appearances last season. Kent Bottenfield (18–7, 3.97) and young lefty Rick Ankiel (*Baseball America*'s Minor League Player of the Year) fill out what should be a stout starting five. The only change in the lineup is at the top of the order, where ex-Brewer second baseman Fernando Vina will step in. The infield is set with Big Mac (who surprised us with last year's encore season) and budding star Fernando Tatis (34 HRs, 107 RBI) at the corners and Edgar Renteria at short. The Cards need a comeback year from catcher Eli Marrero and a lot more production from the outfield trio of Ray Lankford, J.D. Drew and Eric Davis, who combined for only 132 RBI last year. Better fundamentals and fewer Ks (St. Louis led the major leagues in whiffs) would help as well. The Cards will be more than a one-man show this season, and if things come together they could be playing ball in October.

The injury bug bit hard in Pittsburgh last year. All-Star catcher Jason Kendall mangled his right ankle and missed half the season, and 20 other **Pirates** spent time on the DL. Still, the Bucs managed a small-market respectable 78–83 record, largely on the strength of a good starting rotation. Former minor-league free agent Todd Ritchie, who became the Pirates' first 15-game winner since Doug Drabek in 1992, teams with Jason Schmidt, Kris Benson and Francisco Cordova to form a solid front four. The lineup is uneven, but there's a fair amount of talent with Kendall, outfielder Brian Giles (39 HRs, 115 RBI) and infielders Kevin Young (41 doubles, 106 RBI) and Warren Morris. Promising prospects Aramis Ramirez and Chad Hermansen could emerge this year and boost the offense. (Al Martin's trade to the Padres opens an outfield slot for Hermansen.) If the Pirates can find a closer and shore up a leaky defense—that's not asking much, is it?—they have an outside shot at contending for the wild card.

Bronx Cheer

During game four of the World Series, Braves right fielder Brian Jordan handed right-field umpire Steve Rippley a pager that had been thrown onto the field at Yankee Stadium. The ump put it in his pocket. "About an inning or two later, I feel this vibration," Rippley said. "I pulled out the pager and there was a message. It said: 'Umpires suck. You're all blind.'"

The **Cubs** looked in good shape two months into last season. On June 9 they were nine games above .500 and a game out of first place. But just as Sammy Sosa got his homer act on track, the Cubs went off the rails, losing an incredible 72 of their last 107 games and finishing 30 games out of first. The Cubs' 67–95 record was their worst since 1980. Chicago won't slide any further this season, but don't look for much. The pitching staff, which had the league's second-worst ERA (5.27) in 1999, will get a lift from the eventual return of 1998 Rookie of the Year Kerry Wood. But he can't be expected to carry a big workload after coming off reconstructive elbow surgery. Ex-Dodger Ismael Valdes will help, though he could struggle at Wrigley (his career ERA at Chavez Ravine is 2.50, compared with 4.34 on the road). Without good years from Jon Lieber and Kevin Tapani, the rotation will wobble—and it won't get help from a combustible pen. The Cubs will go with five new starters in their everyday lineup, but the only significant upgrade is at second base, where speedy Eric Young takes over for Mickey Morandini. Phenom Corey Patterson could arrive as early as

"Please don't think me bold, but I've been watching you from across the room and I . . . well, I've written a poem about your tits."

midseason and take over in center. Even with Sosa's big bat, the Cubs don't have much hitting. A lot of things need to fall in place for new skipper Don Baylor to lead the Cubs to anything more than a break-even season.

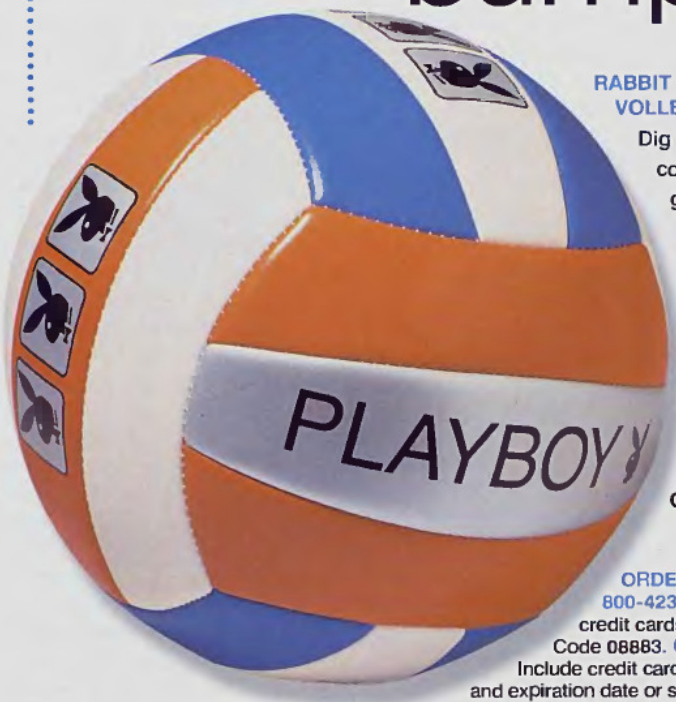
The **Brewers** looked so awful by the end of last season it was easy to forget their record was 47–47 on July 23. Talk about frustrating: Milwaukee had the worst home record in the NL and led the majors in players left on base. Injuries hurt, but the team was done in by its starting pitching. Eight guys started 12 or more games, and only three pitchers threw more than 93 innings. It's been seven years since a Milwaukee pitcher won 15 games. Manager Davey Lopes will have his hands full this year. New general manager Dean Taylor loaded up on bargain-basement pitching in the off-season, but it's likely that new pitchers Jamey (Wright), Jimmy (Haynes) and Jaime (Navarro) will give everybody in Milwaukee nightmares this summer. Offensively the team hasn't done enough to make up for the loss of Jeff Cirillo and Dave Nilsson. That leaves Geoff Jenkins (.313) and Jeromy Burnitz (33 HRs and 103 RBI)—and pray for rain. The trade of infielders Jose Valentin and Fernando Vina opens regular spots for underrated Mark Loretta and promising Ron Belliard (.295, 135 hits). There's pitching (Nick Neugebauer, Ben Sheets) on the way, too. Miller Field won't be ready for the 2000 season, but neither will the Brewers.

NATIONAL LEAGUE WEST

The **Diamondbacks** pulled off the greatest single-season turnaround in the 20th century and won the West in only their second year. A lot of things came together for Arizona. They got career years from Jay Bell (38 HRs, 112 RBI) and Luis Gonzalez (.336, 111 RBI) and near-career years from Matt Williams and Steve Finley. Cy Young winner Randy Johnson led the league with a 2.48 ERA and 364 Ks—the fourth-highest total in baseball history—and midseason acquisition Matt Mantei filled a big hole in the closer spot, connecting on 22 of 25 save opportunities. The D-backs won't equal last year's 100-win season, because a number of their vets aren't going to match last year's output. There are questions: Will Tony Womack play well back at short? Will Travis Lee handle the outfield? Is Erubiel Durazo the real thing at first? If the rotation holds together (number three starter Todd Stottlemyre's bum shoulder is a concern), the Snakes have a good chance to repeat in the West.

Even though the **Giants** lost Barry Bonds for ten weeks last season, they were third in the NL in runs scored. For the first half of the season they were the league's third-best team. Then their lack

bump this



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of pitching caught up with them. Workhorse Russ Ortiz had 18 wins but led the NL in walks allowed. (Between them, Ortiz and Shawn Estes gave up half as many walks as the entire Astros' staff.) Both Kirk Rueter and Mark Gardner were disappointing. Closer Robb Nen had a poor year and underwent elbow surgery last October (he looks iffy for the start of this season). In their first season in Pacific Bell Park, the Giants' fortunes will again ride on their arms. Joe Nathan, the team's top pitching prospect, didn't show much in 14 starts last year. Another good pitching prospect, Kurt Ainsworth, is probably a year away. Outfielder Calvin Murray was MVP of the Pacific Coast League, but at 28 his major league career may have passed him by. The team also has to stay free of injury—especially Jeff Kent. The Giants weren't active during the off-season. Unless Dusty Baker can pull another rabbit out of the hat, there won't be enough hurling to get the Giants to the postseason.

Dodgers general manager Kevin Malone liked his chances going into last season. The self-proclaimed "new sheriff in town" had the Dodgers penciled in for the World Series. Of course, that scheduling trifle known as the regular season screwed up Malone's plans. The Dodgers were an $80 million disaster from the get-go. They finished third in their division and ended with their first losing season since 1992. They won't be the laughingstock of the league this year, if only because Malone has turned in his badge. And they could be in the hunt in the West if their starting rotation comes around behind Kevin Brown. With Ismael Valdes off to Wrigley Field, the Dodgers need a good year from rookie Eric Gagne. Darren Dreifort (13–13, 4.79), Chan Ho Park (13–11, 5.23) and the mysterious Carlos Perez (2–10, 7.43) must also return to past form. The Dodgers are weak up the middle but they improved their offense with the acquisition of $84 million man Shawn Green (.309, 42 HRs and 123 RBI with Toronto). Green brings a gold glove and left-handed balance to a lineup dominated by righties. If Arizona falters, there's enough talent here to make a run in the NL West. Then again, there was enough talent in Los Angeles last year.

Dan O'Dowd, Colorado's new general manager, has given the **Rockies** a complete makeover. He unloaded sluggers Vinny Castilla and Dante Bichette, added 18 new players to the 40-man roster and overhauled the pitching staff. O'Dowd's computer-driven master plan emphasizes speed and defense, and less reliance on the long ball. This may not be a winning formula for a team that plays half of its games in Denver, where the average score last year was 8–7, but it's worth a try. The Blake Street Bomber routine never played well on the road and hasn't even worked out at home recently, where the Rox played .500 ball the past two seasons. The key additions to the lineup are speedy outfielders Tom Goodwin and Jeffrey Hammonds and underrated third baseman Jeff Cirillo, who will bat cleanup between Larry Walker (.379, 37 HRs, 115 RBI) and Todd Helton (.320, 35 HRs, 113 RBI). Pedro Astacio (who had a mile-high-good 17 wins last season) and former Devil Ray Rolando Arrojo are assured of spots at the top of the rotation. Scott Karl, Jose Jimenez, Manny Aybar, Brian Bohanon and Masato Yoshii will compete for the remaining three spots. There's more quantity than quality here, but this year's staff can't be worse than last year's, which had a majors-high 6.01 ERA, set a league record for walks issued and allowed the most runs in the NL since the 1930 Phils. O'Dowd may be onto something in Denver, but his big experiment will take more than a year to pan out.

Night School

Twins manager Tom Kelly is known for his patience. But after rookie Torii Hunter missed a hit-and-run sign in the ninth inning of a game at Kansas City, Kelly held a postgame lesson on the field, at 12:08 a.m. The Royals' grounds crew attended to other parts of the field while Kelly had Hunter look toward third-base coach Ron Gardenhire. "We still miss signs," said Kelly, "and it's August 8."

Pity the **Padres.** The second-highest-paid player on their team is Randall Kirk Myers, who'll make $6.25 million this season. San Diego claimed the 37-year-old lefty off waivers in 1998 to keep the Braves from signing him. Now he's just an albatross. The Padres scored the second-fewest runs in the NL last season, and had the worst road team in the big leagues (28–53). In an era of inflated offense, the Pads scored three or fewer runs in 74 games. Prospects George Arias and Ruben Rivera were busts (Rivera had 23 homers but hit .195). There's not much in the minors (but keep an eye on rookies Sean Burroughs and Mike Darr). San Diego's off-season trades haven't seemed fair—especially Quilvio Veras, Reggie Sanders and Wally Joyner for Bret Boone and Ryan Klesko. Carlton Loewer, who came over in the Andy Ashby deal, fell out of a tree in the off-season and broke his leg. The Padres claim they've lost $75 million over the past five seasons and expect to drop another $10 million this year. GM Kevin Towers doesn't figure to get into the playoffs this year. Maybe next year, or the year after that. Anybody interested in Randy Myers?

"His spin doctors have everyone believing he's a merry old soul."

"Stop me if you've heard this one!"

BEST BARS (continued from page 94)

With waitresses semidressed in short black skirts and halters, this former nightclub is one sexy place.

down-home, funky, ethnic and shit-kicker bars, such as the Green Parrot in Key West and Chilkoot Charlie's in Anchorage. That these varied types of bars made the cut is a testament to the American drinker's quest for a great cocktail. Let's go barhopping.

Bix, 56 Gold Street, San Francisco (415-433-6300). Bix, named for its owner, Doug "Bix" Beiderbecke, is perhaps the most romantic saloon in San Francisco, America's most romantic city. This beautiful Thirties-style supper club has been open for 12 years. But, being hidden away speakeasy-style in an alley that borders the Financial District, it's tricky to find. Once inside, order a drink at the curved mahogany bar and take in the art deco decor that extends throughout Bix' dramatic three-story, two-level space. A Thirties-style torch singer may be crooning or the house band may be playing softly into the night. If you've reserved a booth in the dining room, better still: Bix' food is as delicious as the bar is sophisticated.

"I agree you're more than the sum of your parts, but what's wrong with me specializing in a few of them?"

Casablanca, 40 Brattle Street, Boston (617-876-0999). Of all the gin joints in Boston, this is the one you want to walk into. Described as the club anyone can join, Casablanca has been owned since 1976 by Sari Abul-Jubein, who, with the help of donations from *Casablanca* devotees, has kept and refurbished David Omar White's impressionistic bar murals that commemorate the 1942 movie. Now French-trained chef Ana Sortun serves up superb Mediterranean-inspired tapas at the bar (the dining room has an extended menu). At Casablanca, you can listen to *As Time Goes By* on one of Boston's best jukeboxes while lifting a well-made martini or two.

Chilkoot Charlie's, 2435 Spenard Road, Anchorage (907-272-1010). The nights get long in Alaska, but Chilkoot Charlie's, in Anchorage's historic Spenard district, makes them seem a lot shorter. In fact, by the time you get to all three stages, three dance floors and eight bars in this 30-year-old establishment, the night may not be long enough. (Chilkoot Charlie is a fictional Alaskan character made famous by Ruben Gaines, a writer and radio personality.) At Chilkoot's, you can rock to the music of the Beach Boys, the Doobie Brothers, Megadeth and Van Halen, or retreat to the Forties Swing Bar and dance to big band music or sip a martini and watch a black-and-white movie. Just be careful not to sip too many. You might get the women and the grizzly bears mixed up when it comes to wrasslin' time.

China Grill, 404 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach (305-534-2211). The bar at the Delano, Ian Schrager's superstar hotel in South Beach, is right at the top of our must-visit list. However, drinks at the Delano are not always possible for visitors since you sometimes have to be a hotel guest to gain admission. Our choice? China Grill, which is more accessible and just as popular as the Delano. Start with cocktails at one of the three bars and try the sake-and-vodka-infused martinis. In the dining area, try to score one of the plush, Fifties-era booths, sink in, enjoy your dinner prepared by China Grill's talented chef Ephraim Kadish (a former Israeli paratrooper) and bask in the glow of the beautiful people around you. Don't be surprised if you begin to glow yourself.

Continental Club, 1315 South Congress Avenue, Austin (512-441-2444). Austin is said to have more daily live music per capita than any city in the country. The Continental Club, which claims it's been "rockin' South Austin since 1957," still has the feel of the Fifties. Most of the music stars of country, swing, rockabilly and blues have played here. Big-name musicians from out of town consider a visit mandatory, often jamming with the evening's band. You may find yourself sipping suds alongside Buck Owens or Neil Young. The club's

CHOICE CRITICS

Eric Asimov, restaurant critic and food writer, *The New York Times*

Tony Baker, executive chef, Montrio, Monterey, CA

Charles Baum, restaurant consultant, B.E. Rock, New York City

Terry Black, owner, Super Smokers Bar-B-Que restaurant, O'Fallon, IL

Elizabeth Blau, vice president of restaurant development, Mirage Resorts

Anthony Dias Blue, wine and spirits editor, *Bon Appétit*, Los Angeles

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Dale Curry, food editor, *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans

Sanford D'Amato, chef-owner, Sanford Restaurant, Milwaukee

Dale DeGroff, bartender, New York City

Mimi Del Grande, owner, Café Annie, Houston

Joseph DeLissio, wine director, River Café, Brooklyn

Joe Distler, restaurateur, Riverrun Café and Blind Tiger Ale House, New York City

John Doerper, *Pacific Epicure Quarterly*, Bellingham, Washington

Andrew Dornenburg and Karen Page, authors, *Dining Out*

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Barbara Pool Fenzl, Les Gourmettes Cooking School and host of PBS' *Savor the Southwest*, Phoenix

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Chris Hoffman, publisher, *Shecky's Bar, Club and Lounge Guide 2000*, New York City

Andrea Immer, beverage director, Starwood Resorts, New York City

Michael Jackson, beer and spirits writer, London

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Fredric Koeppel, restaurant reviewer and wine writer, *The Commercial Appeal*, Memphis

Dolores Kostelni, *Roanoke Times*

Lawrence Kretchmer, president, Mesa Grill and Bolo Restaurant, New York City

Corby Kummer, senior editor, *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston

Patricia Mack, food editor, *Bergen Record*, Hackensack, NJ

John Mariani, restaurant critic, *Esquire* and *Virtual Gourmet*, New York City

Ron Marr, editor and publisher, *The Trout Wrapper*, Ennis, Montana

Michael McCarty, owner, Michael's, New York City and Santa Monica

Dan McConnell, owner, Mosquito Coast Outfitters, Key West

Mike Mills, barbecue champion, owner, 17th Street Bar and Grill, Murphysboro, IL

Greg Morago, food and spirits writer, *The Hartford Courant*

Pat Mozersky, columnist, *San Antonio Express-News*

Eric Newell, managing editor, *Ocean Drive*, Miami Beach

Michel Nicschan, chef, Heartbeat, W New York Hotel

Steven Olson, Food Network, New York City

Paul Pacult, publisher and author, *Spirit Journal* and *Kindred Spirits*

Frank Prial, wine columnist, *The New York Times*

Josh Raynolds, national sales manager, Rosenthal Wine Merchant, New York City

Gary Regan, liquor writer, New York City

William Rice, food and wine columnist, *Chicago Tribune*

Michael Schachner, senior editor, *The Wine Enthusiast*, New York City

Bruce Schoenfeld, freelance writer, Boulder

Deborah Scoblionkov, wine columnist, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

Doug Shafer, president, Shafer Vineyards, Napa, CA

Elizabeth Kuehner Smith, associate publisher, *The Wine News*, Coral Gables

Al Stankus, wine and food writer, *Boston Herald*

David Stevens, Modern Living editor, PLAYBOY, Chicago

Rob Sunde, executive producer, WWOR-TV, New York City

Jasper White, chef and owner, Jasper's Roadhouse, Cambridge, MA

shoeshine man, Charlie Miller, is almost as popular as the bar itself.

Continental Restaurant and Martini Bar, 138 Market Street, Philadelphia (215-923-6069). This refurbished former diner in Philadelphia's revitalized Old City attracts a crowd of young professionals seeking good food and great martinis (try the $7 Dean Martini, served in a huge martini glass along with a Lucky Strike cigarette and a matchbook). One of the black-clad waitstaff will mist your "Dino" with vermouth sprayed from an atomizer if you wish. The martini theme continues overhead in the shape of big green olives speared with monster toothpicks. After a couple of drinks, you'll want to order a plate or two of tapas. Delicious.

Coyote Café, 132 West Water Street, Santa Fe (505-983-1615). One of our favorite drinks is the margarita, and nowhere can you find a better one than at this Santa Fe hangout, which the *Zagat Restaurant Survey* named as the city's most popular restaurant. At Coyote there are 35 brands of premium tequila ready to be poured. In fact, owner and chef Mark Miller has written a book on how to make great margaritas and other fresh-juice mixed drinks. (Fresh fruit juice is used in all Coyote margaritas, not bar syrup or synthetic lime juice.) Be sure to sample Miller's Southwestern-style cuisine, especially the barbecued duck quesadillas. In summer, the rooftop Coyote Cantina is where devotees gather to toast the owner and howl at the moon.

F.X. McRory's, 419 Occidental Avenue South, Seattle (206-623-4800). The inspiration for this great Seattle steak, chop and oyster house was the legendary New York bar of the same name. In 1977, Mick McHugh opened this homage to the original in the turn-of-the-century Stewart and Holmes Drug Co. building across from the soon-to-be-rubble Kingdome. Stewart and Holmes also happened to be America's largest wholesaler of fine American whiskey, which did no harm to business at a nearby brothel. The brothel has passed from the scene, but the whiskey dealing at F.X. McRory's is still a booming concern. The center tier of McRory's huge bar is a museum to America's native distilled spirit, bourbon. There are now 165 brands displayed, so the choice is incredible.

Froggy's, 100 Market Street, Pittsburgh (412-471-3764). Froggy's three-story tavern-cum-restaurant is a Pittsburgh institution catering to a clientele that owner Steve "Froggy" Morris describes as "celebrities and has-beens, sports heroes, politicians, jailbirds, the bad and the beautiful." The first-floor bar, the Table of Wisdom, is where Froggy himself holds court while pouring drinks that he claims are the biggest in North America. His steaks are big, too. At the bottom of Froggy's menu it reads, "Furnishings, including tables, chairs and artwork, are available for purchase. Please inquire with the hostess." Like the man at the circus says, "Come on in, folks, and enjoy the show."

Gibsons Bar and Steakhouse, 1028 North Rush Street, Chicago (312-266-8999). From Keegan's on the South Side to Simon's Tavern on the North, Chicago is a city of neighborhood saloons. But Gibsons Bar and Steakhouse, in the heart of Rush Street, seems to capture the essence of the City of Big Shoulders. Gibsons offers big drinks, big steaks, big noise and big fun. Mel Gibson hangs out there when he's in town, as do about 400 other celebrities whose signed photos are up on the wall. The bar, which holds 80, always seems full, and if you're lucky enough to snag one of the stools that snake along its perimeter you're set for the evening. Humongous gibsons are the signature drink. Cigar smoking is not only allowed, it's practically mandatory.

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Blue Ribbon, NYC. "Great drinks, incredible oysters."—**Andrew Dornenburg** and **Karen Page**

Broken Spoke, Austin. "An original country music bar untouched by modern times."—**Dennis Cole**

Chiodo's, Pittsburgh. "Huge collection of beers, war and sports memorabilia and customers' bras."—**Ann Haigh**

Congress Hotel Bar, Tucson. "Old West meets Gen X. Funky and fun."—**Greg Morago**

Dirty Frank's, Philadelphia. "Toothless hags and business titans rub elbows."—**Bill Boggs**

Dry Creek Cafe and Dock, Austin. "The owner, a Texas lady named Sara, might ask you what you want. That's where your luck will end."—**Dennis Cole**

F&M Patio Bar, New Orleans. "New Orleans or Saigon? The hip crowd led me to believe this wild place was still in America."—**Terry Black**

Frank Fat's, Sacramento, CA. "Where legislators pass bills, vote and drink."—**Dolores Kostelni**

Fred's Lounge, Mamou, LA. "The time to be at Fred's is nine o'clock on a Saturday morning, when the tiny dance floor is packed with locals and tourists doing the two-step to a Cajun band."—**Stan Hieronymus**

Lamplighter, Memphis. "The kind of place where regulars have their favorite stools."—**Fredric Koeppel**

Liberty Bar, San Antonio. "Funky, with great food, too."—**Pat Mozersky**

Lobby Bar, Algonquin Hotel, NYC. "Where I can commune with the long-gone wits of the Round Table."—**Gael Greene**

Pony Bar, Pony, MT. "The only business in an old Montana ghost town. Incredible BBQ. Sign in bar says 'Dog capacity 49 (+ 1 mule).'"—**Ron Marr**

Resi's Bierstube, Chicago. "This hangout has more than 150 brews by the bottle and a great beer garden to drink them in."—**David Stevens**

Riverrun, NYC. "Where American bullrunners at Pamplona go to drink in the off-season."—**Bruce Schoenfeld**

Subway Inn, NYC. "You'll feel like you're in every movie made about a seedy New York bar. Don't expect to get picked up—this is where you come to drink."—**Chris Hoffman**

Triangle Bar, River Edge, LA. "Run by Big Nick, the crawfish-eating champion of the world."—**Ray Foley**

Vazac's, NYC. "Great ancient horseshoe bar. A phenom from another era."—**Joe Distler**

New York City (212-524-7000). **Campbell Apartment,** Grand Central Station, New York City (212-953-0409). From Chumley's in the Village to midtown's Monkey Bar and the Plaza Hotel's Oak Room, this town is one incredible conglomeration of saloons with skyscrapers around them. Or under them, as is the case of the Greatest Bar on Earth, which is situated on the 107th floor of the World Trade Center. The Twin Towers are a city unto themselves, so don't let anyone tell you the GBOE is just a tourist trap. At lunchtime, it's frequented by tower and power people. After work, it's a Wall Street watering hole. At dusk, there's a predinner crowd; and from ten P.M. until two A.M. there is nightly dancing to great local bands. In newly renovated Grand Central Station, Campbell Apartment opened just last fall and is already one of the Big Apple's classiest places to linger over a drink. Formerly the offices of a tycoon named John Campbell, this splendid space (with 30-foot-high beamed ceilings) was tastefully renovated and furnished with big, luxurious sofas. You'll find a cross section of New Yorkers who commute to Campbell Apartment to drink in elegant surroundings.

Green Parrot, 601 Whitehead Street, Key West (305-294-6133). The search for the definitive Key West saloon ends at James Bean's Green Parrot, a haven for locals as well as passers-through such as Hunter S. Thompson and John Goodman. There's nothing fancy—decorations are whatever the customers are wearing at the large rectangular open-air bar. The music is eclectic: klezmer, Haitian, zydeco, boogie and blues. Local greats such as Barry Cuda sometimes play beneath the parachute canopy that holds up the ceiling. If you want a T-shirt, the Green Parrot sells several. The original says "See the Lower Keys on Your Hands and Knees." Another: "No Sniveling." There are a couple of pool tables, and a smokehouse next door. The management works tirelessly to avoid progress.

J-Bar, Hotel Jerome, 330 East Main Street, Aspen (970-920-1000). If you've done well off the IPO on your Internet site, you may want to saunter into the private Caribou Club (411 East Hopkins Avenue, 970-925-2929) and ante up the thousand bucks or so for a temporary membership and an opportunity to rub elbows (and perhaps more) with the rich and famous. But the atmospheric J-Bar in the historic Hotel Jerome is just as much fun. It has great live music and fine cognacs, armagnacs and single malts to sip with that rosy-cheeked beauty you met on the lifts. Lest you think the J-Bar is too sedate, keep in mind that Hunter S. Thompson has called it "the best hideout in town."

Lili's 21, 2930 Jacob Street, Detroit (Hamtramck, Michigan) (313-875-

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6555). So many bars, so much music, so little time. The Kress Lounge, Café Mahogany, Baker's Keyboard Lounge and, in Royal Oak, Gusoline Alley (yes, that's the spelling), all have their advocates. But where it's happening is Hamtramck, a classic Polish enclave with scores of bars on and around Joseph Campau Street. Our critics' choice: Lili's 21, where Lili Karwowski (who died late last year) is credited with starting the movement that revived the neighborhood. Suits, punks and yuppies hang out here. After dark, it changes from a belly-up bar to a nightspot that's unapologetically committed to pure rock and roll.

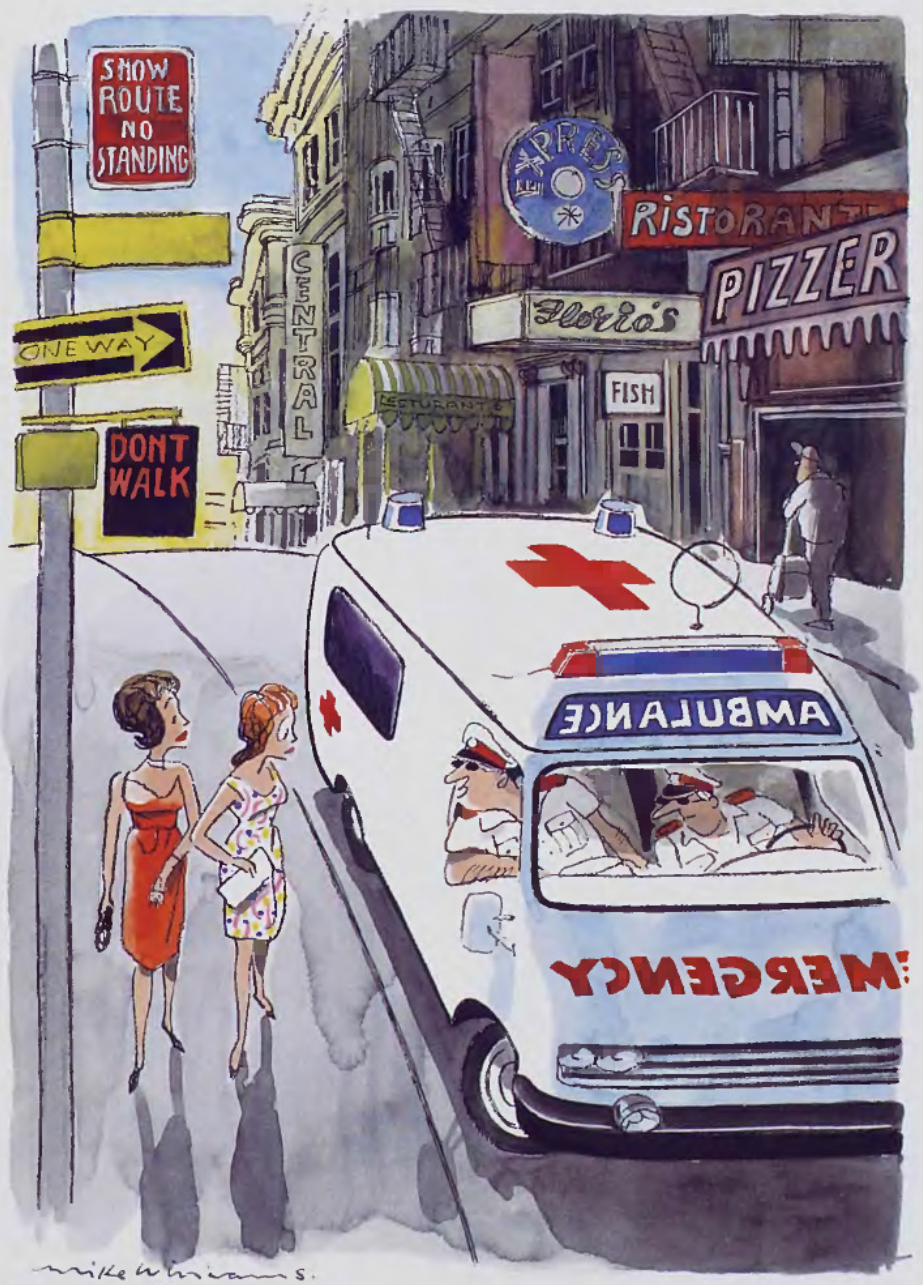
Madam's Organ Restaurant and Bar, 2461 18th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. (202-667-5370). Considering the political shenanigans that have emanated from Washington, Madam's Organ struck us as the perfect bar to represent our nation's capital. The funky name is a takeoff on the surrounding Adams-Morgan district. The building's large mural of a well-endowed redhead (much to the chagrin of the neighbors) gives you an idea of what you are in for: unadulterated, in-your-face fun. Billed as the place "where the beautiful people go to get ugly," Madam's Organ is where an eclectic mix of Washingtonians, congressional staffers and denizens of the bureaucracy go to escape lobbyists and congressmen. They come here to groove to great R&B and bluegrass. The hip crowd is always in a party mood and the prowling privileges are prime, particularly if you have a thing for redheads. The owner does, so he lets them drink for half price. If you get hungry, order a Bill Clinton Burger ("$1 off for women who have slept with the president. Limit: three per table.") Just hope they don't offer your date a discount.

Mercury Room, 1008 Prairie, Houston (713-225-6372). It's been reported that Houston has the fastest-growing downtown in the country. The revitalized Market Square district, where the Mercury Room is situated, is leading the charge. The owners spared no expense in restoring and refurbishing the former Isis Theater to its Roaring Twenties glory. At the bottom of a wrought-iron spiral staircase there's a 25-foot-long floor-to-ceiling bar that's accessible via a sliding library-type ladder. Vodka and caviar are available at the bar—or sample the appetizers and desserts from the menu. In the lounge, there's light jazz at cocktail hour, but the Mercury Room really heats up after 9:30 P.M., when the lounge becomes a nightclub and swings to the live sound of rock, Motown, Latin and blues.

Mumbo Jumbo, 89 Park Place NE, Atlanta (404-523-0330). Our sentimental favorite was the fine neighborhood bar Atkins Park on Highland Avenue (404-876-7249), which is the oldest continuously licensed tavern in Atlanta. The big nod, however, goes to the Mumbo Jumbo supper club, which opened just before the 1996 Summer Olympics and still is jumping. With banquettes flanking the 150-foot-long bar and waitresses semidressed in short black skirts and halters, this former nightclub is one sexy place, especially on Saturday nights, when Marc Allen, its star DJ, spins sounds. The restaurant, with chef Shawn Doty fanning the flames, is one of the best in town.

Napoleon House, 500 Chartres Street, New Orleans (504-524-9752). In Party Town, USA our experts recommend you begin with sundowners at the Napoleon House, savoring a little of New Orleans' long and wonderful history. The building itself was once the home of a mayor, and it's also said that Napoléon, with the help of pirate Jean Lafitte, was planning to escape from exile and make the Napoleon House his home. Unfortunately, the Little Corporal checked out before he could check in. The house drink is a Pimm's Cup, which the bartender will garnish properly with a slice of cucumber.

Red Square, Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, 3950 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas (702-632-7404). At bars in Vegas you can visit Paris, Venice, New York, Monte Carlo and the Caribbean without leaving the Strip. But the place our critics choose to hang is retro-Russian Red Square, where the beheaded statue of Lenin oversees a vodka Valhalla. The bar top is made of solid ice to ensure that your choice from more than 100 frozen vodkas and infusions will remain bone-cold for sipping. Or rent a private locker in the walk-in vodka



"Excuse me, lady, but could you direct us to 34th Street?"

freezer. The $1500-a-year tariff includes the use of a Russian fur coat and cap or a Russian Army jacket when you enter. Only in Las Vegas.

Samba Room, 4514 Travis Street, Dallas (214-522-4137). The Samba Room came highly recommended by our critics, but when we read in *The Dallas Morning News* that it "fairly glows into the wee hours" and is "the bar where the young, reckless and self-absorbed find each other," we knew it was our kind of place. If you are going to be self-indulgent, what better place than this swank club that takes you back to pre-Castro Cuba days with a 25-foot Rolando Diaz mural, a tropical patio, a cigar lounge and a serpentine bar where you can get a great Cuba libre? The dining room is dimly lit. Patrons stirred by Afro-Cuban jazz and the rhythms of Brazil often dance tableside. Later, you can sink into a leather sofa in the lounge and fire up a stogie.

Skybar, Mondrian Hotel, 8440 Sunset Boulevard, West Hollywood (323-848-6027). Wine and spirits editor Anthony Dias Blue puts his recommendations succinctly: Bar Marmont ("New Hollywood, the hippest"), Polo Lounge ("Old Hollywood, a chic power scene") and Barfly ("Young Hollywood"), but other panelists chose Skybar as the place to soar. Nightclub entrepreneur Rande Gerber, who owns Skybar, has developed successful hangouts nationwide, including Aspen's Whiskey Rocks, the Whiskey Bar & Grill in Chicago and New York's Wetbar, Whiskey Park and Whiskey Blue, about which critic Bill Boggs (Food Network) says simply, "Women!" Gerber selects chic, modern architectural spaces (often in hip new hotels) and installs classy, intimate bars and lounges where the drinks are top-notch and the music doesn't drown out conversation. The formula attracts a beautiful, hip and often famous clientele.

Timber Wolf Pub and Grill, 740 East Apache Boulevard, Tempe (480-517-9383). It gets so hot in the Arizona desert that Perry Thompson thought it would be a great idea to build a log cabin with a huge beer hall and decorate it with snowshoes, skis and hunting and trapping paraphernalia. His going-north theme snowballed, and the Timber Wolf has become the place to howl in Tempe. The crowd is an eclectic mix of locals, Arizona State undergrads and out-of-towners who come to sample the 400 beers offered, including draft selections from the 150-tap beer wall. Special evenings include local band appearances and sporting events on big-screen TVs; and Wednesday is Big Ass Beer night, when a 32-ounce glass of beer goes for what Thompson calls a "half-assed" price—$6. After you buy the first beer, you can bring the glass back any Wednesday night for $2 refills.

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OLD SOLDIERS

(continued from page 100)

days from now we'll be back for results, or your bag better be packed. And that bag should contain a toothbrush and nothing else. The clock is running. Understood?"

"Understood."

Smith slapped his hands together and stood up. "Great. Glad we could reach agreement."

He walked out of the kitchen, and as he strolled to the LTD, I had a fantasy of running downstairs to retrieve one of my slightly illegal weapons and blowing away Mr. Smith before his hand reached the car door. I replayed it in my head as the car left my property.

•

There are negatives associated with life in a small town. The local cable provider thinks one channel from Boston is stretching its cultural limits. No bookstores. And the nearest supermarket has boiled ham and American cheese as the extent of its deli offerings.

But there are some advantages, too, and one of them owns and works at the Pinette General Store. Miriam Woods is my oldest and dearest friend in town, and she winked at me as I finished a late lunch of tomato soup and a BLT. She's a widow, several years younger than I am, with dark brown hair and even darker eyes that are lightly framed by wrinkles. She owns the store, she runs the town post office out of a storefront window off to the side, and she's also one of the town's three elected selectmen.

As she picked up plates, her son Eric was restocking shelves in one of the far aisles. She looked over at him and then at me and lowered her voice.

"This Tuesday," she said. "Eric has basketball practice and I was thinking of coming over to your place for dinner."

"Really?"

"Really. You supply the dinner and I'll supply the desserts. One of them will be in an ice cream container." She lowered her voice even more and winked again as she started wiping the counter.

I said slowly, "But I won't be home."

"Well, there's always Thursday night, because——"

"Miriam, I won't be home all next week."

She stopped wiping the counter. "Oh?" And my dear Miriam was able to stuff about a ton of frost, disappointment and inquiry into that little two-letter word.

"That's right. I have . . . I have business to attend to."

Her wiping cloth was clenched in a fist. "I see. What kind of business?"

"I'm sorry, I really can't say. It'll take less than a week and then I'll be back."

She managed a smile and shook her head and went over to the cash register, counting and recounting bills, all the while talking, as if talking to herself. "You've never once agreed to go away with me for a trip to somewhere, even if it's just Portland or Bar Harbor. You've always said you couldn't leave the town, that you wouldn't feel comfortable."

Then she looked at me and slammed the cash drawer shut. "Now you tell me you're leaving town for a week, and you can't tell me why. To hell with that and to hell with you."

She marched to the rear of the store and I followed, but she locked herself into her little post office cubicle. I suppose it would have taken me all of 30 seconds to get through the lock, but I knew I would pay for those 30 seconds for a very long time.

Instead, I went outside to my truck and was climbing in when I heard a familiar voice.

"Owen? Got a sec?"

I rolled down the truck's window as Eric approached in his white store apron. He's about as tall as I am but gangly, with the loose limbs of a 15-year-old. He shares his mother's hair and eyes, and those eyes were troubled now.

"Sure," I said. "More than a sec, whatever you need."

"Just wanted to see how you're doing with the Internet. Got any more questions for me?"

I did at that, and we talked techno-speak for a while, him using phrases like HTML and links and hypertext with practiced ease, while I struggled along like a backwoodsman who's entered sixth grade at the age of 40. Eric had helped introduce me to the joys of cyberspace and was my own personal tech help line. I asked him a few questions and he gave me more than a few answers.

Then he nodded back toward the

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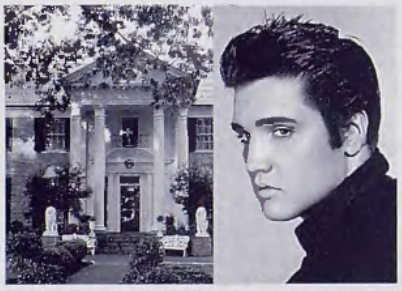

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store. "I heard most of what went on back there, though I wish I hadn't."

"I wish I hadn't taken part in it, so don't worry."

Quick nod as he smoothed down the front of his store apron. "Mom gets like this, around this time every year. This is when dad died, and it bothers her still, though she never says a word."

"Does it bother you?" I asked.

He shrugged. "Not like it bothers her. I don't remember him that well. He spent most of his time either out in the woods or in a bar. Best memory I have is him lying on the couch, trying to balance a Coors can on his forehead and yelling at mom when she didn't move fast enough to get him another one. That's about it."

I started up the truck and he said, "Don't worry, she'll be fine in a bit."

"Honest?"

A wide smile. "Gosh, I don't know, Owen. I just thought that would make you feel better."

"Thanks," I said. "It did, just for a moment."

I then drove home, where I packed up and left the next morning to murder an old Soviet spy.

•

The day was warm, and I drove with the windows open, enjoying the wet smell of spring, of hidden whispers of trees and grass and crops ready to grow, ready to get back to life. As I drove out of town I felt a tingle along my hands, as an old and deep part of me appreciated that I was leaving the reservation. Mysterious Mr. Smith had been correct. There were certain things I could not do as part of my agreement with the Department of Justice, and one of them was to cross the boundaries of the township of Pinette. Even thinking of the bad business ahead of me, I couldn't help grinning as I watched the miles roll up on the odometer. For at least this day, I was free to go where I wanted. It was a heady feeling, and if I had found the right tune, I would have been singing. But the only thing on the radio was a syndicated pop psychologist who seemed to gauge her success by seeing how many of her callers burst into tears.

About halfway to Cardiff, I pulled over at a minimall and bought a strawberry ice cream cone. I strolled inside, checking out the stores and the people moving about, young and old, families and single men and women of all ages and sizes. I sat on a bench and finished my cone, thinking about the pundits who carped about the "malling" of America. A serious problem, I'm sure, but on this spring day I was happy to be here, free to go into any one of half a dozen stores.

Which I did. I bought a dozen new hardcover books and put them in the truck, went into a computer store and

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picked up some software, and then went over to an electronics store where I acquired a digital camera and a nice cassette tape recorder. Elsewhere, I spent an obscene amount of money on clothes, and when I left the minimall, my credit card was almost smoldering at the unfamiliarity of so much use.

I continued north and came to a tiny county airport. A sign outside said FEARLESS FERN'S FLYING SERVICE and I had a neat little thought of renting Fern and his Flying Service and heading out to British Columbia. Instead, I kept on the job.

•

While the day had been warm, the night was cold indeed, and lying on the dirt and leaves in a copse of birch trees outside a Cardiff farmhouse was making my bones ache to the point where I wondered if they'd ache forever, or if a long hot bath would set things straight. I was wearing a "gillie suit," a camouflage outfit with such varied colors and strips of netting and cloth that even in daytime I would melt against the backdrop of the forest. With a good gillie suit and the patience to keep still, a hunter can be damn near invisible, even with the target standing next to him.

My target wasn't standing next to me, though. He was walking around in his old farmhouse about 100 feet from my hiding spot, alone except for an old collie dog that cowered whenever Len Molowski—or Leonid Malenkov—approached. The man appeared to be in his mid-60s, with thick white hair combed to one side and black-rimmed glasses. His face was red and fleshy, and he wore a checked flannel shirt and brand-new blue jeans. I had been watching him since dusk, watching him cook and eat dinner by himself, toss a bag of trash on the porch, kick the dog when it got in his way and then sit on a couch to pass a few hours in the ghastly blue light of the television.

There were some things I did not see. I didn't see him cleaning a Kalashnikov AK-47 by lamplight. I didn't see a flag of the old Soviet Union flapping in the breeze from a flagpole. And I didn't see an Order of Lenin pinned to his thick chest.

I lifted my binoculars so I could scan the property. The farmhouse was larger than mine, with two stories and a wraparound porch that went around three sides of the house. There was a barn off to the right—also larger than mine, but I didn't have barn envy—and then what looked like a few dozen acres of fields beyond to the east. The nearest neighbor's house was about a half mile away. Everything on the property was neat but shabby, like he was doing all right but didn't want to show up the local populace.

I put the binoculars down, exchanging them for a handheld nightscope. The scenery flashed into pale green as I scanned. Two pickup trucks—one on cement blocks—and a tractor and other equipment in the barn. Nothing out of the ordinary—nothing, of course, except for me in the backyard, lying on the cold ground, 9mm Smith & Wesson Model 915 holstered to my side, water bottle, binoculars, nightscope and some hard candies all within easy reach. If I had been younger and more eager, I suppose I could have handled this job immediately and been back home by morning.

But, among other things, I wasn't that person anymore. So I waited. The night air was still and it was so quiet that I could hear the drone of engines far off in the distance, and the murmuring of Len's television set. Eventually, Len got up from the couch and went upstairs. An upstairs light went on and I heard the flush of a toilet, and then all the lights went off and I stayed in the cold woods for another hour. Something rustled behind me, but I ignored it. I listened to the frantic hoo-hoo-hoo of an owl and heard a crash of wings and a squeaking noise as something was killed just a few yards from me.

And then I crept away, moving slowly. Getting out is as important as getting in.

•

For the next couple of nights and days I kept watch on Len's house and discovered he had a pattern. He worked in the barn in the mornings or went out into the fields with a tractor, turning up the earth. At noon, he finished and went into town for lunch at the Cardiff Café. In the late afternoon, he spent his time around the house, and by the time evening rolled around it was the same routine: make dinner, kick the dog, watch television and go upstairs.

I envied his bed and his home. I was living out of the back of my truck, for I wanted no record of my stay at any hotel or motel in the area. After my nights of surveillance outside his house, I slowly and carefully trekked my way back through the woods to my truck and drove to a place I'd picked out earlier. In these woods were many dirt paths and logging roads, and from one of these, a different one each night, I backed into the woods until I was sure I couldn't be spotted. Then I slept poorly in the rear of the truck on a foam mattress wrapped in a sleeping bag, and while Len had a cozy hot breakfast, I made do with coffee from a little camp stove and cold cereal. Fires mean smoke and smoke in the woods gets noticed, which is not what I planned for this little adventure.

His midday journeys into town, which I timed, each lasted more than an hour. On day three I waited till after he drove off and then I rose from my hiding spot. I shed the gillie suit for what would pass for a disguise in these woods: a pullover jacket (the better to hide my holstered 9mm), a long-billed cap, binoculars around my neck and a Roger Tory Peterson bird book in my hand. I sauntered into Len's backyard as if I belonged there, went up to the rear door and in a few seconds I was inside. Len hadn't even bothered to lock the door.

Inside and off to the left was a large kitchen. The collie looked up from the

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kitchen floor, eyes curious, and thumped his tail as I murmured softly and rubbed his head. The tail thumped a few more times and he licked my hand and rolled over as I scratched his belly. Poor guy. Based on his treatment, I'm sure the collie would have helped me shift the furnishings into a moving van, but I had other plans.

I moved quickly, starting in the basement. It took just a few minutes to peg Len as a neat freak, his basement tidier than my kitchen. Boxes of clothing and canned food were stacked on the shelves, and there was an oil furnace that looked as if it had powered the 1939 World's Fair. Upstairs, the collie wagged his tail again as I went through the kitchen, the living room and the downstairs bathroom. Len had a few books, recent best-sellers, in the living room and the usual news and sports magazines and newspapers. No *Khrushchev Remembers*. No *Gulag Archipelago*. No *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*.

On the second floor, I found his bedroom and a spare room, and, besides neatly made beds, bureaus and closets filled with clothes, and a few more magazines, nothing else. I checked the time. I had been in the house about half an hour. Time to leave.

Downstairs, I gave the collie another belly scratch and went back to the woods to put on the gillie suit. Forty-five minutes later, Len came home. As I waited for him, I thought about what I had not seen in the house. Quite a lot.

There were no family pictures on the walls or the bureaus.

No collections of letters or scrapbooks of photos.

No framed certificates of achievement from 4-H or the Grange or the Future Farmers of America.

In short, the things that should have been there, if Len were a usual Maine farmer.

From inside the house came the yelp of the collie, and I refocused my binoculars.

•

The next day I picked up a few groceries and made a quick phone call from a pay phone at a combination gas station and convenience store, a new one. I had not shopped at the same store twice, because I didn't want to be remembered, not even for a moment. When Miriam picked up the phone, she said, "Owen, I apologize."

"Oh," I said. "Very well. Apology accepted."

A sigh from the other end. "Don't you even want to know what I'm apologizing for?"

I turned and looked at a large Agri-Mark dairy truck rumbling by. "You're right. I should have asked."

Another sigh, but lighter than the first

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one. "Look, I was having a bad time the other day. Some old memories."

"I hear you."

"Of course you hear me, but I don't think you understand. When you said you were leaving and you couldn't tell me much—well, I don't like being left high and dry twice in the same decade."

"I understand."

I could hear voices in the background. "Maybe you do, Owen. All right?"

"Absolutely, Miriam," and I was going to say something else when I heard a few more voices and then hers, saying, "Gotta-go-bye" all in one breath as she hung up.

•

When Len next went back into town, I wandered around the reaches of his property in my bird-watcher's disguise. He had enough acreage for one man to farm, if he hired help in the spring and fall. Beyond the edge of one of the fields, I found a dump, where he had trashed a few appliances, a box spring and some worn truck tires. When I walked up to investigate, a chipmunk jumped on a rusting washing machine and chattered at me.

"Oh, hush up," I said. "Don't you see I'm trying to uncover a dangerous Soviet spy?"

And I laughed.

•

Heading back, I saw something behind the barn that I hadn't noticed before, a worn path leading into the woods. I followed it, looking for a stream or a fishing hole, but instead it went deeper into the pine forest and then up a slight incline. The trail was old and well maintained, with branches and brush cleared away from the tree trunks. Last year's leaves crackled under my feet as I made my way. I stopped for a moment to note a red driveway reflector light nailed into a tree trunk. The nails were rust-red from being outside a long time. Farther up the trail were more reflectors. The trail was marked for someone traveling through here at night.

The climb got steeper and I rested for a few minutes, taking a swig of water from my bottle, before following the path through a series of switchbacks. After a few minutes of climbing that made my thighs twitch, I was on the top of the hill, breathing hard. "Excelsior," I muttered, as I sat down on a fallen tree log.

The view was not what I expected. An airport was down there, with a long concrete runway that ran at an angle to the hill. A control tower and a number of hangars were in the distance, together with enough buildings for a small town. It was a much bigger airport than the one I had passed on the drive out, and also much bigger than such a remote and rural area would seem to need.

From the knapsack, I pulled out my

binoculars and a map of the county. I scanned the few small private planes parked near the hangars. Those hangars were scaled for aircraft much bigger and faster than these Cessnas and Piper Cubs.

On the map, the marker for the town of Cardiff had a stylized aircraft symbol nearby. Below the cartoon plane were the words:

Raymond Air Force Base
Strategic Air Command
(Closed and now available for civilian use)

Looking down at the old Air Force base as I sat there, the damn spring sun didn't warm me a bit.

•

That night in my gillie suit, I watched Len go through his routine. Tonight was a bit different. At the kitchen table, he tossed down shot glass after shot glass of something from a clear bottle. Vodka was my guess. Then he started singing, a morose tune that I couldn't make out. It could have been in a foreign language, or it could have been that the breeze was blowing away from me, softening the sounds from the house. I waited for long hours as he gently placed his head on the kitchen table and fell asleep, and my hands and feet were trembling from cold before he woke to stagger upstairs.

•

The night after the drinking bout, after Len left for town, I stepped right up in my bird-watcher's outfit. I whistled as I walked through his yard and through the open sliding barn door. Ain't rural life grand, where people keep their outbuildings wide open for the benefit of would-be assassins?

A John Deere tractor was parked in the center of the barn, along with a collection of tills, spreaders and harvesters. Everything looked to be in good working condition. There were a few bags of fertilizer and seed, and a ladder going up to the loft. I climbed it—wincing as a splinter dug into my hand—and on the second level found a collection of tools, leather harnesses, rolled blankets and more bags of fertilizer. I went back down and outside past the tractor. Something was wrong, something was quite wrong.

I looked around, picking at the splinter on my hand. My internal alarm bells were jangling and everything felt odd, as though my inner ear balance had gone haywire. I squinted at the barn. It was bigger outside than it was inside.

I went back inside and paced the interior, counting off my steps, and then I came outside and repeated the process.

The dimensions were wrong.

Something was hidden inside.

•

And it didn't take long to find. To the left as I went back in was an empty stable. I ran my fingers around the wood of its far wall and quickly located an eyebolt and heavy iron ring. I twisted and tugged and something went click, and I was able to swing the door open. Inside was a room with some boxes and a low table.

A faint light flickered from overhead, and I looked up to see a wire running from the fixture down to a car battery. A light that automatically came on whenever the door was opened. How convenient. The wooden table was built right up against the wall, and an old kitchen chair was slid underneath. On the wall were thumbtacked photos, old black-and-white pictures that were curling at the edges, of Air Force aircraft: KC-135 and KC-10 tankers, and B-47 and B-52 bombers.

Squatting in the middle of the table was a dusty shortwave radio and receiver, about 20 or 30 years old, it looked like. Beside it was a desk calendar from 1979. Next to that was a small collection of books, cheap drugstore paperbacks. I opened one and saw rows of numbers, line after line. There were a few books in Russian, the Cyrillic writing looking odd in this place. There was also a small leatherbound notebook, which I scanned. The first brief entry was dated to 1959 and the last to 1981. The handwriting was in Cyrillic, tight and nearly illegible.

Maybe it was the dust or the flickering light, but a headache, a powerful one, started throbbing at the base of my skull. To the left, leaning against the wall, was a large pack frame with webbed straps that looked as if it were designed to carry a heavy load, and next to the frame were four wooden boxes, about two feet deep, three feet wide and five feet long. The covers weren't nailed shut; they had fasteners that allowed the boxes to be opened quickly. I had a pretty good sense of what I would find when I opened the first box.

There, nestled in a dry and cracked Styrofoam casing, was a long dark green metal tube, with a handle about a third of the way from one end. There was also a sighting mechanism and a few other odds and ends, and a projectile with fins, about 30 inches long. More Cyrillic writing decorated the tubing.

I closed the cover.

And it was the creaking floor that saved me.

•

I spun on my feet, ducking my head and raising my left shoulder, as Len Molowski charged in, swinging an ax. The blade bounced off my raised shoulder, sliced into my left ear and struck the wall. Len was shouting something incomprehensible and I backed away, tripping over the kitchen chair and falling flat on my ass on the barn floor. With a triumphant bellow, he took three steps

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WIRED

Page 37: "Touch and Go": **Fingerprint identification technology:** By *Who Vision*, 949-837-5353. By *Digital Persona*, 877-378-2738. "Wild Thing": **Game controller** by *Interact*, 410-785-4064. "Dishing on Radio": **Satellite radio:** By *XM Radio*, 202-969-7100 or www.xmradio.com. By *Sirius Radio*, 212-584-5100 or sirius radio.com. **Satellite radio receivers:** By *Pioneer Electronics*, 800-746-6337. By *Alpine Electronics*, 800-257-4631. By *Sony Electronics*, 800-222-7669. By *Panasonic*, 800-211-7262. "Format Wars": Digital Video Recorders: **D-VHS:** By *Panasonic*, 800-211-7262. By *JVC*, 800-252-5722. **DVD-RAM:** By *Panasonic*, 800-211-7262. By *Samsung*, 800-726-7864. By *Hitachi*, 800-448-2244. By *Toshiba*, 800-631-3811. **DVD-RW:** By *Pioneer*, 800-746-6337. By *JVC*, 800-252-5722. By *Zenith*, 256-772-1515. By *Ricoh*, 800-742-6477. By *Sharp Electronics*, 800-237-4277. By *Mitsubishi*, 800-332-2119. **DVD+RW:** By *Philips*, 800-531-0039. By *Thomson Electronics*, 800-336-1900.

MANTRACK

Page 51: "A Simple Pasta": **Cookbook** from *MarSala's Enterprises, Ltd.*, 630-833-2770. Page 52: "Vintage Wyatt": *Wyatt's Fine Wine Rack and Cellar*, 650-591-9463. "Tenting Tonight, Luxuriously": *Costanoa*, 877-262-7848 or 800-738-7477.

TRAVEL GEAR

Pages 92–93: By *Samsonite*, 212-833-8830. **Temperature jacket** at select Saks Fifth Avenue and Fred Segal stores, 213-651-3342, 310-458-3557. **Pillow jacket** at Saks Fifth Avenue. **Nylon stopwatch jacket** at Saks Fifth Avenue and Mario's, Portland, 503-241-8111 or Seattle, 206-226-6161. **Suitcase** at Saks Fifth Avenue. **Voice jacket** at Bergdorf Goodman, Saks Fifth Avenue and Harry Rosen, Toronto, 416-981-9097. **Microfiber jacket and backpack** at Mario's, Portland, 503-241-8111 or Seattle, 206-226-6161. **Binoculars** from Sharper Image, 800-344-4444. **Portable DVD player** by *Sony*, 800-222-7669. **Cell phone** by *Nokia*, 888-665-4228.

SHOWSTOPPERS

Pages 96–97: **Motorcycles:** By *Kawasaki*, 800-661-7433. By *American Honda*, 310-532-9811. By *Yamaha Motorsports*, 800-692-6242. By *Ducati North America*, 888-382-2842.

JOCK STRAPPED

Pages 128–129: **Watches:** By *Casio*, 800-962-2746. By *Seiko*, 800-545-2783. By *Pulsar*, 800-545-2783. By *Nike*, 800-644-6453. By *Immersion*, from Howard Frum Jewelers, 312-332-5999.

ON THE SCENE

Page 179: "Now Hear This": **CD receiver** by *JVC of America*, 800-252-5722. **Cell phone** by *Ericsson*, 800-374-2776. **PC headset** by *Plantronics*, 800-544-4660. **Handheld computer** by *Compaq Computer*, 800-282-6672. **CD tuner** by *Blaupunkt*, 800-950-2528. **Robot** by *MGA Entertainment*, 818-894-2525.

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toward me, ax raised high in the air, eyes glaring, face red, mouth twisted in anger, and by then I had frantically dug under my coat and pulled out my 9mm.

I pointed it up at him, both hands tight in the approved shooting grip, and snapped back the hammer. The clicking sound seemed to echo in the tiny room and he paused, ax in midair, the portrait of a frustrated lumberjack.

My voice was calmer than I thought possible. "Right now I'm bleeding, Len, and when I'm bleeding, I tend to get upset, and when I'm upset, my trigger finger gets shaky. So toss the ax out into the barn and I won't be upset anymore. Understand?"

He stood there for just a moment, puffing and breathing hard, face still red. Then he tossed the ax, where it clanged off the John Deere tractor, and said, "You're trespassing. You're on my property. You get the hell off before I call the cops."

"Sure," I said. "Sounds like a good idea. And when you tell them about the trespasser in your barn, I'll tell them about the Soviet military officer named Leonid Malenkov, who owns said barn with surface-to-air missiles and other delights, and who's been in this country illegally for about 40 years. Care to guess who'd they be more interested in?"

His eyes flickered to me and then to the ax, and I knew he was regretting having tossed it. Then he collapsed. His face whitened, his shoulders slumped and he nodded, a sharp little motion.

"So, you've come," he said. "CIA? FBI? What is your name? What do you want?"

I motioned to the kitchen chair. "The name is Owen. I want you to sit down on that chair. And then we'll talk. And please don't insult me by thinking I work for either of those agencies. Right now I'm an independent contractor who's feeling particularly ornery."

•

A couple of minutes later, I had sloppily tied my handkerchief to my left ear, which was throbbing and hurt like hell but offered the advantage of allowing me to focus my mind. Len sat in the chair, thick hands folded on his lap. I sat on the table next to the radio, gently swinging my legs beneath me as I kept my 9mm pointed in his direction.

"Bomber gap, right?" I asked.

He looked at me, brow furrowed, eyes unblinking. "I don't know what you mean."

"Look, this will go a hell of a lot easier if we don't play games, Len. I know your background, your real name." I waved my pistol in the general direction of the hill I had climbed earlier. "You've got half a dozen handheld surface-to-air missiles—they look like an experimental version of the SA-7 Grail, right? And you're living next door to a Strategic Air

Command base, supposedly chock-full of nuclear-armed B-52 bombers, just waiting for the word to take off and head up over the Arctic Circle and incinerate your motherland."

I waggled the pistol back and forth. "Deep cover mission, right? You and probably a couple of dozen comrades, you took up residence near Air Force bases in the U.S., maybe even Britain and Turkey and other places. You wait for the word, and when the word comes, and when those B-52s are rolling down those runways during an alert, you're ready for them. A couple of surface-to-air missiles later, you've got flaming B-52 wreckage everywhere. You and your comrades have taken care of the situation, right here in the enemy's backyard."

Len was quiet, but his head moved just a bit, as if he were nodding. "Bomber gap," I said. "Back in the Fifties and early Sixties, the U.S. thought there was a bomber gap, that you folks had more and better bombers than we did. And you know what? There *was* a bomber gap, but on the other side. We had bigger and better bombers, and your leaders, they must have been scared. They must have looked for something to tip the balance in their favor. Something quick and dirty and cheap. And they came up with you, am I right?"

A quick, almost embarrassed nod, and then he talked rapidly, like he was finally glad to tell someone of what he had done. "Yes. We were young, committed, all volunteers. We were told it would be a long, hazardous mission. But we did what we had to do. You had us ringed with bases, your NATO, your missiles. Your generals boasted of destroying us in a fortnight."

He folded his arms and stared at the far wall. "We were sworn to secrecy and taken to a remote area in Soviet Asia, near Alma-Ata. We were trained and retrained on how to fire our missiles. We fired them in the air at first, and then at drones, and then. . . ." He looked up at me. "Hard to say now, even years later. Last, we fired them at aircraft piloted by real pilots. American pilots, captured during the Korean War a few years earlier. They were told that if they could fly these jets and survive, that they could go home." A shrug. "None did, of course."

I touched the bloody handkerchief on my ear. "Of course. And so you were sent here, to wait. And wait some more. What was that like?"

"I lived as a Maine farmer, every day hating this place and its people. Bah. No culture, no sense of family, no real life. Just scratch a living out of this poor dirt and screw your neighbors."

"Why didn't you go home?"

"Home," he said, twisting his face as if the word itself was sour. "First, I have no money for such a trip." He looked up at me, fists clenched. "And what kind of

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home awaits me? The stupid bastards! They gave it all up. All of it! And without a fight."

"Miss the old Soviet Union, do you?" I asked.

Len glared at me. "What do you think, you fool? At one time we were the mightiest empire in the world. We started with nothing, nothing at all. A backward peasant country dismembered by war, and in less than a decade, we were making you and your allies tremble. We meant something. We were powerful, we strode across the world stage, and now. . . ." He nearly spat out the words. "Then we gave it all up, and for what? We have a drunken clown as a president. We have whores in Red Square and the Mafia ruling our cities, and that is what we have as we leave this century."

I looked around at the old gear and the radio and said, "How long since you've had contact from home? Five years? Ten?"

A shrug. "That sounds about right."

"In case you haven't noticed, your target air base has been closed for some years now," I said. "And the country you worked for doesn't even exist. There are ways of getting money. Why in hell didn't you pack it up and leave?"

He folded his arms, jutted out his jaw. "Because I am a Soviet soldier. I follow my orders. And my orders are to stay here and keep watch on this base. I cannot predict the future. The old Communists may come back into power. This air base may be used again by your Air Force. I am not a coward, and I do not shirk my duty. I stay here and follow my orders."

I shook my head. "You know, there's a guy I just met that you should talk with. You two would probably get along. Old soldiers from old empires, still fighting in the middle of the wreckage and debris."

"And you, you are not an old soldier?"

"At one time I was, but things have changed."

"Then why are you here? To arrest me? Bring me back to your superiors?"

I lowered my pistol, aimed in his direction. "You see, that's the problem. I was sent here to kill you."

And with that, I pulled the trigger of the 9mm twice.

•

Back at home and exhausted after my nights and days in the Maine woods, I slept late. After I unloaded the new clothing and toys I had bought up on my way to Cardiff, I went to my little upstairs office and my computer, and, remembering certain things that Eric had taught me, did a little research in the wild reaches of the world wide web.

Mr. Smith was as good as his word and arrived the next day. I watched from my upstairs office, flanked by my new toys, as the dark blue LTD bumped up the dirt driveway, and the two men started walking to the house. Old master and new master. They weren't very different.

I waited for the knock on the door before I wrapped some things up and went down to the kitchen. Special Agent Cameron and Mr. Smith stood at the door, the FBI man looking like he was on his way to the dentist, the government man with a large grin on his face.

"Am I being graced with both of you today?" I asked.

Cameron said, "I'll wait on the steps." He sat down gingerly on the stone steps to my house as Smith came into the kitchen. We sat at the table and I said, "Later this morning someone's coming to pump out my septic tank, and I'd rather spend the time looking into my septic tank than at you, Mr. Smith, so let's make this quick"

He smiled, self-satisfied. "You did well. Very good."

I made a show of looking surprised. "Surveillance. You guys were watching me."

A happy nod. "That we were."

"Your folks were good. Didn't notice a thing."

"They're the best."

"And what did they notice?" I asked.

Smith leaned back in the kitchen chair, the old wood groaning under the pressure. "They saw you conduct yourself well, performing a surveillance of the property for three days. They saw the target return early, and they heard two gunshots. They then saw you back up the target's pickup truck to the barn, stuff him in an old feed bag in the rear of the truck and then drive out at about midnight. On a bridge spanning the Queebunk River, you dumped your load, returned to the property. Then you left. Our team moved in, checked the bullet holes in the wall and the blood on the floor. We also found the evidence of the target's connection to Soviet military intelligence. Like I said, nicely done. There was even a typewritten note for the mailman, asking him to take care of the dog. You're an oldie and a softie, Owen."

I kept my hands steady on top of the table. "So I did a good job for you and your government friends, killing an old man who's no longer a threat to this country?"

The chair came down with a thunk. "Owen, in our little agency, we decide who's a threat or not. And then we decide what to do. And in this case, you did exactly as we asked by killing that old man. Very good."

"Really?" I asked.

"Not bad at all. In fact, we may extend

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our little agreement with you, have you perform a few other . . . unusual tasks."

My voice was flat. "In other words, you want to hire a killer."

"If you want to be blunt."

I looked down at the table, slowly shook my head. "Sorry. I'm not feeling well, and I have to go to the bathroom." I looked up and said, "Being retired and all, sometimes your body betrays you."

He waved a hand in the air. "Sure. You run along. We'll talk in a few minutes."

I got up from the kitchen table and went upstairs. Ten minutes later, I flushed the toilet and went to the head of the stairs. "Smith!" I called down. "Come up here for a moment, will you?"

I went into my office and was rummaging around in the closet as he came in and looked at my bookshelves and my humble computer, humming along on my desk. I came out of the closet with my 9mm and in one snap-quick motion, I inserted the barrel into his left ear.

"Hey!" he said, hands raised. With my free hand, I put a finger to my lips.

"Shush," I said. "Come over here and sit down. That's right, in front of the computer."

We moved slowly and I tried to keep everything focused, for I could feel something from him, a coiled sense of energy like a rattlesnake ready to strike. I said, "In less than five minutes, Smith, you'll be free to go, but if you try anything sneaky, anything at all, I'll blow your damn head off. Understand?"

"You'd be in a world of hurt," he said, no longer smiling.

"Not really," I said. "I don't think Special Agent Cameron would miss you that much, and in this county, I would only have to explain to the police and my neighbors and a couple of lawyers how I came to shoot a trespasser in my house. Perhaps I'd get a stretch, but in less than a month everything would be back to normal again, except that salesmen wouldn't dare come down that driveway. Have a seat."

He did, settling himself heavily into the chair. I pushed the pistol into his ear just a little more for emphasis, and I said, "Take hold of the mouse, and double-click on that little icon in the upper left-hand column."

Smith did, and through the connection of the pistol against his head, I felt his body tense up. "What the hell is this?" he demanded, his voice a step above a strained whisper.

"Oh, I'm quite proud of it," I said. "This is my very first webpage. See the nice headline, about a government conspiracy to murder old Soviets? Pretty catchy, don't you think? And right below that are half a dozen little thumbnail pictures of you, Smith, as you came up to my house a while ago. Digital cameras are amazing, aren't they? You can process and download pictures instantly. And you'd be surprised at what you can

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do with a microphone, some long wire and a cassette recorder. See those little speaker icons on the bottom? Double-click on the left one, why don't you."

His hand moved grudgingly and after the little snap-snap of the mouse came Smith's voice, coming from my computer's twin speakers. "Owen, in our little agency, we decide who's a threat or not. And then we decide what to do. And in this case, you did exactly as we asked by killing that old man. Very good."

I took a deep breath, feeling that intoxicating rush of putting everything on the line against a dangerous foe. "To repeat something you said, first time we met, the clock is running. You don't have any time for arguing. This page is up and active. I've posted messages to a dozen Internet discussion groups, inviting them to check out my webpage. And every second you argue, every second you try to wiggle out of what's going on, that means dozens and hundreds and thousands of visitors are going to see your lovely face and hear your thoughtful words. Think your bosses will be impressed next time they do your employee evaluation?"

"What do you want?" he asked, and as his shoulders sagged, I knew I had won.

"I close down the webpage, and you leave here and never come back, and none of your friends ever bother me again. Agreed?"

"Agreed," he said with about as much enthusiasm as a man agreeing to have a toenail removed with a chisel.

"Oh," I said. "One more thing. Stop bothering Special Agent Cameron. He's no friend of mine, but I'm used to him."

I pulled the pistol out of his ear and stepped back. He stood up, his face mottled red, his fists clenched. "Agreed."

I went over to the computer, double-clicked that, downloaded this, and in a moment the screen was blank.

Smith said, "You bastard."

I smiled. "That's the nicest thing that you've ever said to me."

•

Outside, as Smith stomped his way over to the parked LTD, I said to Cameron, "A moment of your time, Agent Cameron."

He looked over at me with tired eyes, and for the first time since he had first come to check up on me, I felt sorry for him.

"Yes? What do you want?"

What I wanted was to sit him down in my kitchen and talk to him, to find out what he saw in his mind's eye, his memory of that awful time in Waco and what happened that caused the torching of scores of people, setting off fuses that killed hundreds of people more, and to find out how he made it through, day after day.

But I said, "You owe me."

A slow nod. "You may be right. What do you have in mind?"

I told him. He thought about it for a moment, cocked his head.

"You got a deal," he said.

The LTD's horn blew twice as Smith leaned over and hammered the steering wheel, and Cameron managed a wan smile as he walked away.

"I don't envy you the ride back," I called out.

"Actually, I'm looking forward to it," he said.

•

Two days later I was driving north, Miriam at my side, holding my hand. She said, "I know Eric's big enough to hold down the store and close it up by himself tonight, but damn it, I don't like being kept in the dark like this."

"In a few minutes, all will be revealed," I said, driving easily with one hand. "I have a secret plan, m'dear."

"You do?" she asked, eyes a touch playful. "And what's that?"

I squeezed her hand. "If I told you, it wouldn't be a secret, now, would it."

She shook her head, muttered "you" and looked out the window.

But she didn't take her hand away.

After a while of driving, I turned right into the parking area of a small airport. The familiar sign said FEARLESS FERN'S FLYING SERVICE. She looked over at me, surprised. "What are we doing here?"

"You'll see soon enough," I said.

We got out of my truck and I grabbed her hand again as we walked around a small hangar. A Cessna was waiting, engine grumbling, propeller turning, and a bearded man standing under the wing nodded at me and I nodded back. Miriam tried to say something, but I pretended the noise of the engine was too loud. A few minutes later, seated in the rear and with earphones on and seat belts fastened, we were in the air, the bearded man piloting.

"Owen," she said to me, her voice static-filled over the intercom system. "What's this all about?"

I gently reached over and grasped her hand. "It means a number of things. It means you and I are going to Portland tonight, for dinner and to see a musical. We'll also be spending the night at a beautiful bed-and-breakfast near the harbor."

And savoring the new agreement I had with Cameron, I added, "Why don't we plan on getting away at least once every month? And you can name the place."

She nodded, blinked hard a few times and then looked out the side window. She held my hand all the way until we landed.

•

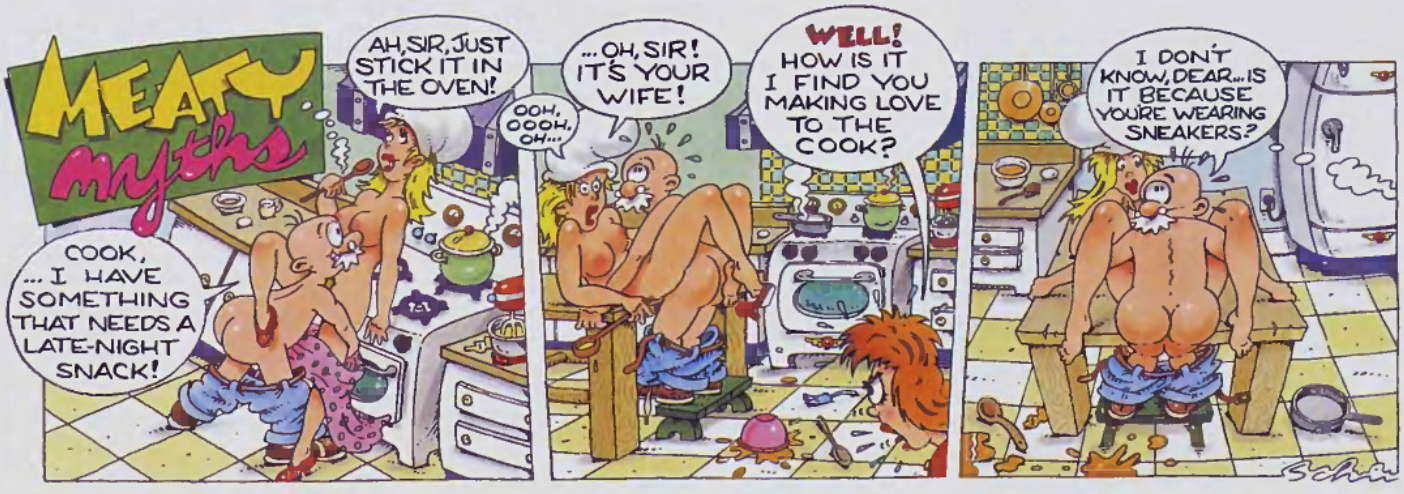
Some nights later I was in my pickup, engine idling. Next to me, a small rucksack in his lap, sat Len Molowski—or Leonid Malenkov, if you prefer.

"My ears are still ringing from when you shot at me," he said, looking out across at the barn where he had lived in the upstairs loft for the better part of a week.

"You're a farmer. Ever hear the proverb of how a farmer gets a mule to pay attention?"

Even in the darkened truck cab, I could tell that he was grinning. "Yes, I have. You strike him over the head with a wooden plank."

"So consider those shots two whacks over the head, Len. I had to make you understand that you'd been noticed, and


MEATY myths
COOK, ... I HAVE SOMETHING THAT NEEDS A LATE-NIGHT SNACK!
AH, SIR, JUST STICK IT IN THE OVEN!
OOH, OOOH, OH...
...OH, SIR! IT'S YOUR WIFE!
WELL! HOW IS IT I FIND YOU MAKING LOVE TO THE COOK?
I DON'T KNOW, DEAR... IS IT BECAUSE YOU'RE WEARING SNEAKERS?

that the next guy to come to your farm wouldn't be as thoughtful or as charming as I was. Frankly, all that talk about being a good Soviet soldier was a bit boring."

The man sighed. "Perhaps you are right. But after decades of keeping such a secret, I had to talk and talk, and I had to convince you and myself that what I did was right. I had to know that these years had a purpose. That they were not a waste."

"Did it work?"

Another sigh. "No, I do not think so. When you spread your blood on the floor, told me to play dead so you could put me in the truck in a feed bag, and when you dumped your camping gear in another feed bag and threw it into the river, I was humiliated. A man who was supposed to be my enemy was trying to help me. Why did you do that?"

I rubbed at the steering wheel. "It was a long war, the Cold War. There had to be an end to it, the last two old soldiers coming to an understanding. It just made sense. That's all I can say."

I reached into my coat pocket, pulled out a thick envelope and passed it over. "Here. Inside's a goodly amount of cash. Pay me back whenever you can. About a half mile down this road is the center of town. There's a Greyhound bus station, bus leaves in an hour to Portland. From there . . . well, you can go anywhere you want. But if I were you, I might head to New York City. Go to a place called Brighton Beach. There's a lot of Russian émigrés who live there. You might find a way to get home if you ask the right people."

"This money, this is charity, and I cannot——"

"Oh, shut up. You're still a marked man, and it's in both our interests that you get the hell out of here. All right? Now, get. Before you miss the bus."

Len waited for a moment, and then the envelope rustled as he packed it into his rucksack. He held out his hand to me. "I never forget. *Da svidaniya.*"

"*Da svidaniya* to you, too."

He got out of the truck, a stranger in an odd land, and I watched him as he walked down the road, rucksack on his back. I thought about what lay ahead of him. A bumpy bus ride to Portland. Then another long ride to New York, to a city full of strangers. Then . . . who knows. Perhaps he would try to make a living with the rest of the émigrés in that crowded city. Perhaps he would go home, try to adjust to a motherland that had changed so much. It seemed inevitable that he would face poverty and loneliness, with no one to care where he went or where he stayed.

I started up my truck and headed back home.

God, how I envied him.

Tantric Sex

(continued from page 90)

thrusting away and trying to hold on to his *ching*, while doing Rich Little–like impressions of every creature on God's green earth with his dick. We were both reaching the brink of ecstasy—and all of a sudden he had to stop.

Then J. began to get the hang of it. Mount Vesuvius wasn't going to erupt, and the natives didn't have to evacuate. But he got the hang of it too well. All that locking and squeezing had done its work. The volcano became inactive. And all the starting and stopping had done nothing to stoke my fire. "This doing anything for you?" J. asked as he gamely thrust on. "Not much," I replied. Obviously, this thrust thing is an acquired skill.

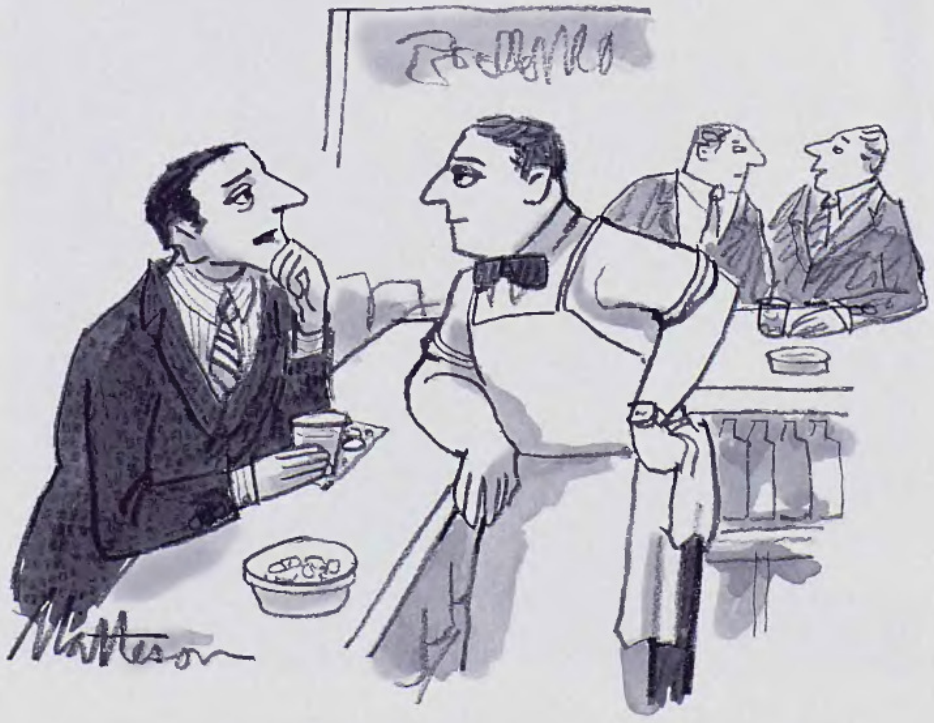
But we went back to the Congress of the Crow and, let me tell you, all J.'s earlier exertions paid off. In spades. And a few hours later, lit with passion from all the sex we'd had, we had to have sex again. And the next morning.

So, in the end, what do J. and I think of tantric sex? Well, unlike the superstars, we don't usually have the spare six hours in a day to indulge our desires. Our window of opportunity for sex is usually nine P.M. until reruns of *Friends*. And sometimes just the thought of all the preparation and time everything would take was exhausting. But I have to say, whenever we were engaged in a position or trying a technique, it was time well spent.

Is tantric sex better? Taking the time to clear our thoughts and focus on ourselves first and then each other seemed to open us up to opportunities for pleasure and for becoming closer. We may not have done all the moves right, but we found new ways to be together. Some positions were winners: the Swing for me, the Bee for J. And you can't go wrong with the old Congress of the Crow. Others were less inspiring. I imagine it differs for every couple. We loved reading about sex, planning our next evening's activities and talking about it while we were doing the deed. Our frank and fond postgame wrap-ups often led us right back to the playing field.

We discovered anew that good sex engenders more good sex. The more we talked about it, the more we had; the more we had, the more we wanted. And the more pleasure we had. Scheduling sex turned out to be surprisingly exciting. Little things—like looking into each other's eyes, learning something new that pleased the other, laughing while, Twister-like, book in hand, we tried to contort ourselves into the positions in the guide—all had a certain "pretzel logic," to quote Steely Dan. The more educated you are about sex and each other's likes and dislikes, the better it will be, right?

Now, I know you've hung on my every word, but please bear in mind, J. and I are not experts. We researched tantric sex and arbitrarily chose our exercises and mode of exploration. So do try it at home, but for Vishnu's sake, consult an expert beforehand!



"Well, I guess the honeymoon is over. She wants a divorce."

the single life

(continued from page 49)

place, but the moment passed. There wasn't time, anyway. She had to be home before her husband got there.

Meeting ruined our relationship. The next time we talked I told her about that moment in the cab, and she said excitedly, "Tell me what you would have done to me if you'd taken me to your place." I could practically hear her fingertips skittering down to tickle the prize between her thighs, and I tried to crank up another fantasy for her, but my heart wasn't in it anymore. Now that she was real to me, I wanted *real* sex. I told her I felt like she was using my stories just to help her dull husband chub it up when he got home from work. She'd told him everything, including that we'd met, and he threatened to end the marriage if we met again. She said she loved him and promised not to meet or talk to me again.

Her husband was then transferred to another city, and she moved with him. In the void after that, trying to decide whether I was addicted to Mona or to phone sex, I hooked up with a few other women on the phone lines. It wasn't as good on the rebound. One woman wanted to pretend I was spanking her while she burbled, "Thank you, Daddy," at every slap. I'm attracted to the sordid, but that's a little too sordid.

The best things about phone sex are that it can help you imagine what you want and teach you how to ask for it. It opened me up to a kinkier part of my nature. Mona said it opened her up, too. Now that she's vanished from my life, I try to put a positive spin on what we had. I like to believe I helped her learn to ask her partner for what she wanted. I'm sure she's having better sex with her husband now. Sometimes that's a strange consolation, and sometimes it's no consolation at all.

"I guess we can forget about them ever picking up the scent of that escaped con again. . . ."

Michael Palin

(continued from page 140)

there are very few clues. There is a lot of reserve. Hemingway's reputation as Hemingway was so much greater than his reputation as a writer. There's a certain brand image of Hemingway, which is quite extraordinary. The Japanese love it. People will buy furniture named after Hemingway and after his novels. They will go to his house in Key West, although they've not read any of his books. There aren't many writers who appeal to me as a sort of comic situation. Here's a man who had a desperate need to be judged as a great writer, and in the end he's judged as someone who can sell sofas or bedside tables named after Kilimanjaro. His legend supplies me with a world that is occasionally completely absurd, and I think he was aware of that.

14

PLAYBOY: Your Hemingway travels took you to Chicago and to Pamplona. Compare the Bulls with the bulls.

PALIN: The former are a basketball team. They're not the ones that play at Wrigley Field. I didn't want to get that wrong. When I was watching the running of the bulls in Pamplona, there was a certain notion of the bulls as heroes. The bulls are the most dignified creatures in this entire event, in these crowded streets. People are running away from each other rather than from the bulls, and it struck me that a person is far more likely to be trampled to death by a German backpacker than by a bull.

15

PLAYBOY: As long as the U.S. government maintains the Cuban embargo, will Americans keep missing out on great cigars and maybe something more?

PALIN: Beautiful girls. Lovely women. And Havana is a beautiful city. There are 1957 Chevrolets, all with Russian engines. Wonderful combination.

16

PLAYBOY: You've traveled extensively in the U.S. Can you comment on our fascination with firearms and our insistence on a literal interpretation of the Bible?

PALIN: America feels very young and inquiring, hence it's a nervous country compared with tired old Great Britain, where everybody has seen it all before. Charles Darwin was far too smart for his own good. If you're going to have simple beliefs, they've got to remain simple beliefs. You can't start thinking, Well, it could be this or it could be that. Then you're done for immediately. Americans seem to believe that there is something out there that is right, and that you can get to it using two simple steps. Defend yourself, get your spirituality regularly recharged by going to church and

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reading the Bible. Certainly there seems to be many people who believe that the right to bear arms is somehow part of the American birthright. Part of that is that America is geographically still a wild country. People are surrounded by a great deal of emptiness, and emptiness is a threat, and a threat requires something to reassure you that you'll be OK when whatever creature that's out there comes to get you. America is this mix of what is sort of backward—there are hicks out there—and then you find that there's some incredible scientific facility doing work on genetic mutation. America is still an experiment.

17

PLAYBOY: What's the fiercest creature that you've ever encountered?

PALIN: Apart from John Cleese, the killer rabbit we used in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* was the nastiest thing I've ever come across. It was a small motorized rabbit on a wire that led straight to your throat. It was the way it looked at you; it snarled at you with teeth bared. Absolutely ferocious. Generally with animals, if you stand there and stare back, they'll go away. There aren't many that want to tear you limb from limb. An elephant in full war cry is the most frightening encounter I've ever had. We once got between a mother elephant and her young. This they don't like. Elephants are big anyway, but they have a way like cats do of sort of expanding when they're threatened. This elephant suddenly became twice as big. I've never heard trumpeting quite as loud. It's not anything you hear normally in the wild. It's a huge roaring shriek. The guides I was with, who seemed able to cope with anything, never shit themselves quite so fast. Unbelievable, hideous noise.

18

PLAYBOY: What would you suggest a young American do before he starts the next hot Internet venture? Should he travel and acquire some life experience?

PALIN: Yes, go East, young man. An American should go to Europe. The satisfaction I get from going to America should be felt equally by Americans coming to Europe. Within the space of the state of Texas you have ten different countries and ten different languages. Europe might confuse certain single-minded young computer planners of the future. It's good to have doubts about whether setting up a new computer company is the only way forward. I hope it isn't. Confusion is important in life.

19

PLAYBOY: Can you pass on some of the knowledge you've gained in your travels regarding diet, personal hygiene and language skills?

PALIN: I'm a great believer in adapting yourself to the country you're in. Listen to the people there about where you should go to eat and whether you really need a particular bug cream. When you travel you should have any possible medical prophylactic available. Have every injection. Take it in the buttocks like a man. I think it was Lauren Hutton who said that. I lug a huge case of all sorts of beautiful, neatly wrapped, bottled-up pills and medicaments. So I've hardly had to use anything apart from a bit of athlete's foot cream. Eat whatever you're offered because you never know when the next meal will come. I used to laugh at that, but it's absolutely true. You just don't say, "I'm not quite ready for lunch. I'll give it another hour." It's now five hours later, the train is still stuck in the middle of the desert and the man who had some sort of roast has disappeared. And that also involves being fairly unfussy about what you eat. Don't get squeamish about eating testicles or snakes or grasshoppers, if that's what's around, because generally that'll mean that this is what they cook best.

20

PLAYBOY: A gentleman we know tells us his wife tends to purchase furniture and major appliances when he's away on hiking trips. Any strange goings-on in the Palin household when you're away for long periods?

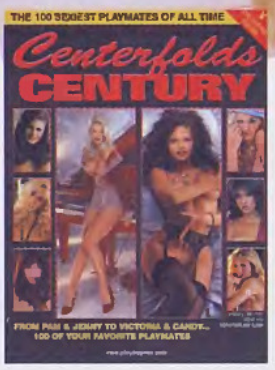
PALIN: Whenever I ring up there's nobody there. So I'm never quite sure what's going on. When I come back, there's a slight freeze on for about a week, as I interrupt the general pattern of life. There's no trace of French marines or Russian milk deliverers. But because I've been away my dear wife has carved out a complete alternative life of her own. Which is excellent. I'm sure it's the secret of being married for 34 years. It's the way marriages should develop. She has her world and I have mine. We sleep in the same bed and all that. But she goes off and learns badminton and all sorts of things that I didn't know she could do before I went away.

"Oh, hi dear. Professor Edwards was just explaining the dynamics of global warming."

PLAYMATE NEWS

CREAM OF THE CROP

Our ranking of the top 100 Playmates of all time in the January 2000 issue was so well received that it inspired a spin-off. *Playboy's Centerfolds of the Century*, a collector's Special Edition, takes an in-depth look at the lucky 100, including more photos and updates on the Playmates' lives and careers. "This Special Edition is definitely an extension of the pictorial," says Debbi West, who coordinated the publication. It wasn't easy to choose 100 Centerfolds out of the more than 500 who have appeared in the magazine since December 1953. Marilyn Monroe, PLAYBOY's first Centerfold (or Sweetheart of the Month, as she was called then), is featured, as is current Playmate of the Year Heather Kozar. Others who made the cut include Nikki Schieler, Janet Lupo, Allison Parks, Eve Meyer, Bebe Buell, Ola Ray, Brandi Brandt, Sondra Theodore, Julie Cialini, Stacey Sanches and Jaime Bergman. The issue is available on your newsstands now.


THE 100 SEXIEST PLAYMATES OF ALL TIME
Centerfolds
CENTURY
FROM PAM & JENNY TO VICTORIA & CANDY...
100 OF YOUR FAVORITE PLAYMATES

We couldn't get enough of Jayne Monsfield (above), who appeared os Miss February 1955 and then showed up in four more pictorials. Above: Our favorite Ploymates include Victorio Silvstedt and Jenny McCarthy.

PLAYMATE BIRTHDAYS

May 4: Miss December 1967
Lynn Winchell
May 5: Miss July 1991
Wendy Kaye
May 16: Miss March 1975
Ingeborg Sorensen
May 21: Miss June 1993
Alesha Oreskovich
May 28: Miss March 1988
Susie Owens

ALOHA, REBECCA

As we told you in Rebecca Scott's August 1998 Playmate story, she is determined to become a rock star.

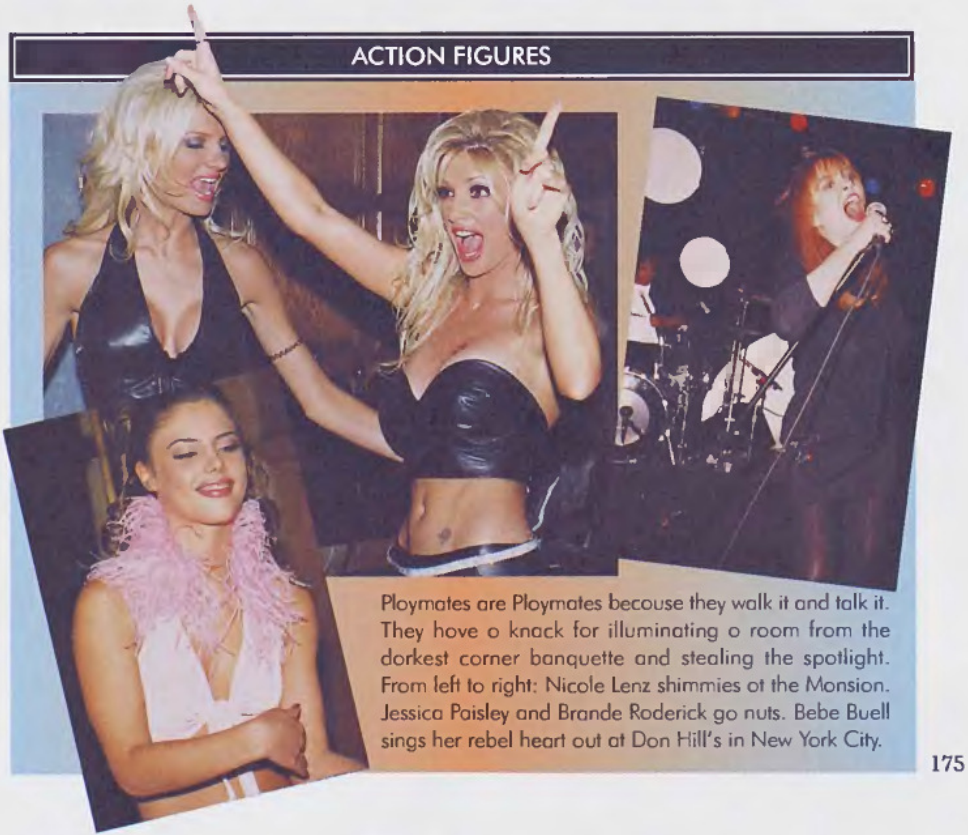
Well, the voluptuous singer is on her way. For six weeks this winter, Rebecca starred in *The Playboy Show*, a song-and-dance variety spectacular that played nightly (and got great reviews) at the Ilikai Nikko Hotel in Honolulu. According to the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, "Rebecca Scott adds marquee value as a Playboy Playmate. She sings several songs and gets a lucky guy on stage for a brief 'date.' They share a banana, dance and pose for a comic photo." When the show's run ended, Rebecca had obviously proved her vocal talents: She was immediately signed up to star in another show.

40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

Centerfold Ginger Young did not need PLAYBOY as a Hollywood stepping-stone. When we selected her as Miss May 1960, the red-haired stunner had already chalked up roles on *The Jerry Lewis Show*, *The Steve Allen Show* and *Murder, Inc.* and a Ford Spectacular. As one would guess from her résumé, Ginger was a vixen with a sense of humor; she supplied punch lines as well as pulchritude. She also loved mountainous hot fudge sundaes. (On her Playmate data sheet, turn-offs included "loud people, rock and roll and small hot fudge sundaes.") Ain't she sweet?

Ginger Young.

ACTION FIGURES



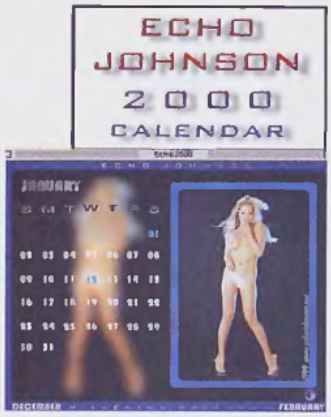
Ploymates are Ploymates becouse they walk it and talk it. They hove o knack for illuminating o room from the dorkest corner banquette and stealing the spotlight. From left to right: Nicole Lenz shimmies ot the Monsion. Jessica Paisley and Brande Roderick go nuts. Bebe Buell sings her rebel heart out at Don Hill's in New York City.

PLAYMATE NEWS

The only Playmate we know is Victoria Silvstedt, because she was in *Baseketball* with us. She's cool, and not too shabby in the looks department.

ECHO EACH DAY

"It's the wave of the future, totally cutting edge," says Echo Johnson of her new online calendar, which can be purchased for $7.95 at Echo's website (echojohnson.net). The 12-month calendar, which Echo describes as "more eye candy than organizer," incorporates new technology that allows viewers to change the photos, make the numbers fly in and out, listen to music, watch video clips and receive audio greetings from Echo. "It's more than just your standard print calendar," she says. "As of now, there are only two other calendars like this on the Internet. It's really neat."



DAPHNEE'S NO ANGEL

Daphnee Duplaix had to channel her inner bitch for a recent role on *Angel*, the WB network's spin-off of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The show, which stars David Boreanaz and Charisma Carpenter, featured Daphnee as Serena, a nightlife-loving seductress who, along with best friend Cordelia (Carpenter), becomes impregnated by an evil alien. "I had to wear a big prosthetic belly," says Daphnee. "It was fun." Keep watching—rumor is Serena may become a recurring character.

PLAYMATE TRIVIA

Q: Miss October 1957 Colleen Farrington was pregnant in one of her PLAYBOY photo shoots. Who is her gorgeous movie stor daughter?

A: Actress Diane Lane (*The Cotton Club*, *A Wolk on the Moon*). Diane's father is acting coach Burt Lone.

GIRL TALK

Jaime Bergman galloped into our lives as the rodeo-loving 45th Anniversary Playmate. Now she's the star of *Son of the Beach*, a comedy series produced by none other than Howard Stern.

Q: *Son of the Beach* has been described as "*Get Smart* on the beach." Would you mind telling us more?

A: The first episode premiered in March. I think it's going to be a hit. It's a great comedy. There aren't many TV shows like it. It's kind of like *South Park* with human beings. If you like *Airplane* or *Naked Gun* movies, this is the show for you. It's so hard to keep a straight face while shooting the show because it's just so much fun. It's nice to wake up in the morning and go to that set.

Jaime Bergman.

Q: Which do you prefer, acting or modeling?

A: Acting. It's definitely more of a challenge.

Q: *Vanity Fair* called the Playboy Mansion the hottest nightclub in Los Angeles. Do you agree?

A: Yes! There's a wonderful vibe there. It's just a party. I love reuniting with the Playmates and seeing celebrities. And I love dancing to Hef's disco music. Oh, and the food! There is always good food.

Q: Where have you traveled recently?

A: Romania and Hungary. I went to both places to promote the launch of PLAYBOY, and I was the first Playmate in both editions. Bringing PLAYBOY to these countries was amazing because they had waited so long for it.

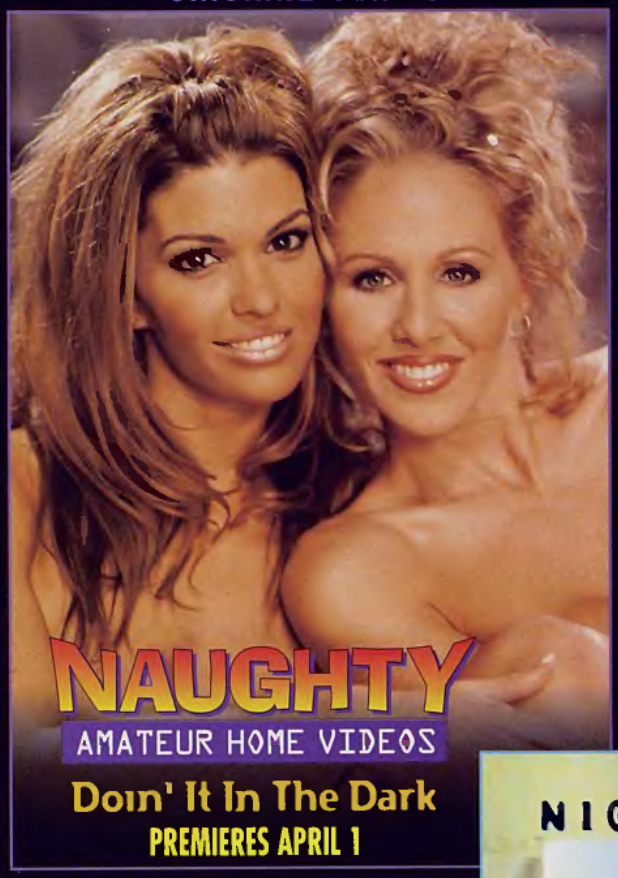
PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Anna Nicole Smith proved that size matters when she strutted down the catwalk for a Lane Bryant lingerie show. All of the models, including **Mia Tyler** and **Kathy Najimy**, wear at least a size 14. . . . During a trip to New York City, **Carol** and **Darlene Bernaola** (pictured below) wore wacky lids designed by Ivy Supersonic. . . . In **Lit's** new video for *Miserable*, **Pamela Anderson Lee** stars as a giant who ends up eating the band members. It's a trip. . . . While you're tuned in to MTV, look for **Carrie Stevens**, who appears in **Third Eye Blind's** video for *Never Let You Go*. . . . **Tina Bockrath** is now an on-air correspondent for *National Enquirer TV*. . . . **Angela Little** and **Vanessa Gleason** got crazy while filming *Wild on the Windy City*, a special that showcases Chicago's hot spots on E. . . . **Alexandria Karlsen** has landed a part in *Blow*, a movie about cocaine that stars **Johnny Depp**. . . . **Rebekka Armstrong**, **Dolores Del Monte** and **Janet Quist** (pictured below) helped out at a Muscular Dystrophy Association event in San Diego. . . . **Jenny McCarthy's** new Beverly Hills home was featured in *In Style* magazine. The manse houses Jenny, her director husband, **John Asher**, and their three dogs, Bubba, Baby and Bailey.

Hats off to the twins.

The selfless volunteers.

ORIGINAL SERIES

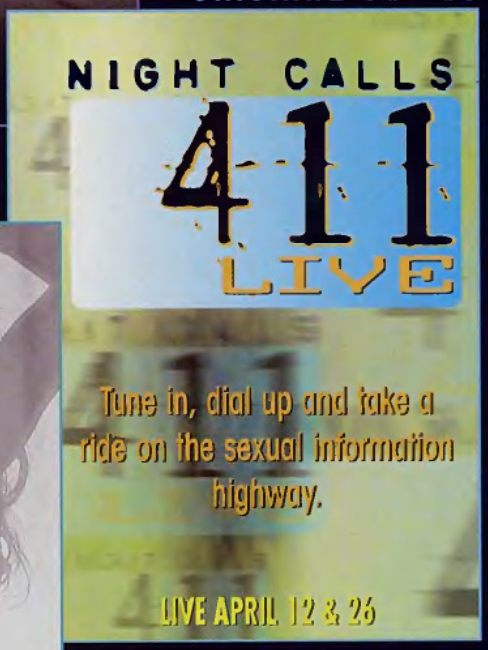


PLAYMATE HOSTS

Brande Roderick
Miss April

Brooke Berry
Miss May

ORIGINAL SERIES



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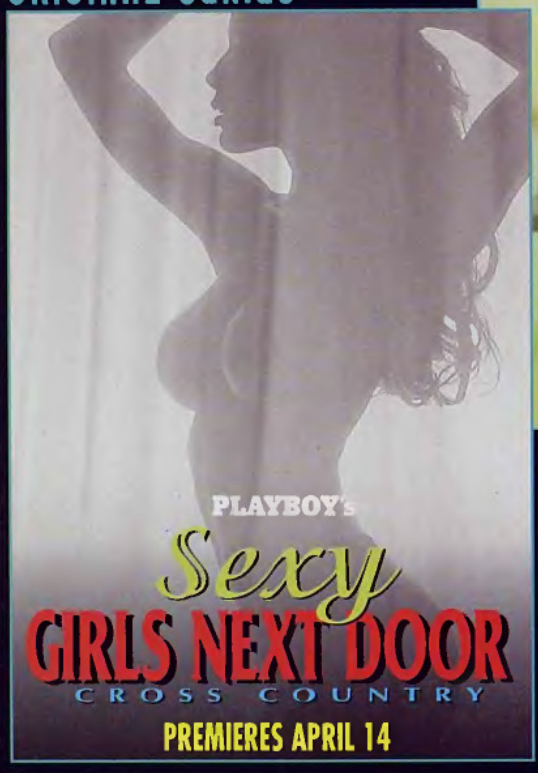

ADULT MOVIES

more than you ever imagined...

ESSENTIALLY JULI: FIRSTS – It's first things first as Juli Ashton risks all to reach new heights of pulsating pleasure. April 16, 17, 19, 25, 27, 29, 30

HOLLYWOOD SINS – A Hollywood talent agent sacrifices his career for a fling with his boss' wife. April 8, 12, 16, 20, 24

NAUGHTY AMATEUR HOME VIDEOS: DOIN' IT IN THE DARK – Dim the lights to dark and feel your way through the depths of satisfaction. April 1, 7, 12, 20, 22, 24, 27

MIS SPELLED – Trouble brews as two sex-starved witches plunge into a book of libido-enhancing spells. April 1, 7, 10, 16, 18

NIGHT CALLS 411 LIVE – Sassy and street-smart hosts are trained in the ways of sex and ready to take your calls.
LIVE April 12; Replay April 15, 17, 19 LIVE April 26; Replay April 29

NIGHT CALLS LIVE – When Juli Ashton and Tiffany take to the phone lines viewers are guaranteed a privileged point of view. And a chance to win a trip to Hedonism III on every show.*
LIVE April 5; Replay April 8, 10, 12 LIVE April 19; Replay April 22, 24, 26

PLAYBOY VIDEO CENTERFOLD: PLAYMATE 2000 BERNAOLA TWINS – Double your pleasure when two identical Latin lovelies lead you through the sexy streets of Miami. April 23, 25, 28, 30

PLAYBOY'S SEXY GIRLS NEXT DOOR: CROSS COUNTRY – Newcomers from across America compete for a role in a professional Playboy video. April 14, 16, 22, 23, 25, 28

SEX COURT: LIQUID LITIGATION – It's easy to let the defendant off easy when she's got what it takes to be the next hot adult star.
April 7, 9, 11, 12, 15

THE SWINGING WIVES – Mixing business with pleasure helps a young executive get ahead in more ways than one. April 22, 26, 30

PLAYBOY TV

*For program information and official rules for the Night Calls/Hedonism III™ sweepstakes go to:

www.playboytv.com

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PLAYBOY on the scene

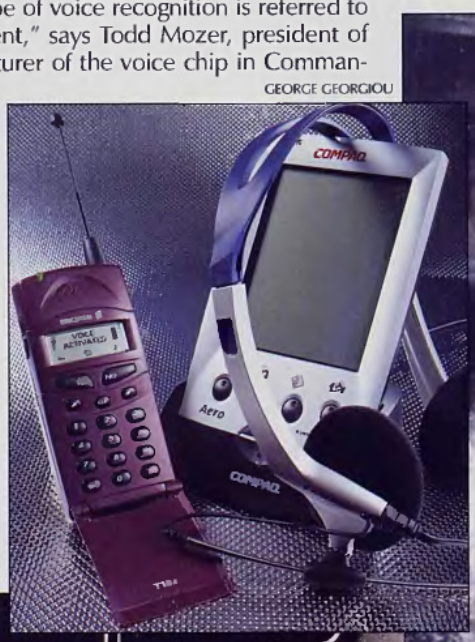
WHAT'S HAPPENING, WHERE IT'S HAPPENING AND WHO'S MAKING IT HAPPEN

NOW HEAR THIS

Getting a reaction from an early voice-recognition gadget was like dealing with a drunk buddy. You could tell it what to do over and over again, but it would just sit there. Fortunately, the technology has sobered up over the past decade, and there are a zillion new—and functional—applications. Some, such as MGA Entertainment's CommandoBot robot (below, far right), learn the nuances of your voice and then perform tricks on demand. ("CommandoBot, launch tomahawks," you say. "Yes, master," it responds, firing plastic toy missiles at your boss' ankles.) Others comprehend orders, regardless of who's giving them. The latter type of voice recognition is referred to as "speaker independent," says Todd Mozer, president of Sensory, Inc., manufacturer of the voice chip in CommandoBot as well as chips used by NASA to record sounds in space. More sophisticated (and more costly) speaker independent chips are typically incorporated into car navigation systems and car stereos, such as JVC's new El Kameleon KD-LX50 CD receiver ($430). "You could have a rotten cold, or pick up a Texas twang, and these products will still function because they've been programmed to learn all varieties of American English," says Mozer. Undoubtedly, telling your car stereo to change radio stations is far safer than taking your eyes off the road to push buttons. Likewise, a car navigation system such as Blaupunkt's TravelPilot (above), which uses speech synthesis to provide turn-by-turn directions, is less hazardous than a system that requires you to study a map while driving. "Enhanced safety is the most obvious benefit of speech technology," says Mozer. That's why we're also seeing it in cellular phones. (The Ericsson T18z pictured here is one of several models that automatically dials a person's number after you speak her name into the handset.) Pure convenience is another bonus. There are products that let you turn on the lights and change TV channels via voice command, and software that can transcribe voice recordings into text. Note taking could become obsolete, as could typing. With a headset such as the one by Plantronics (pictured), you can dictate documents to your computer. "Eventually, everything that currently has buttons will accept voice commands," Mozer says. "I call it the Buttonless Society." We call it pretty cool.

—BETH TOMKIW

GEORGE GEORGIOU



Near right (left to right): Ericsson's T18z mobile phone dials numbers by voice command ($200). Tell your computer what to do through Plantronics' LS1 ($50), a PC headset that doubles as stereo headphones. Voice files stored on Compaq's Aero 2150 ($400) can be downloaded to a PC and converted to text via software such as IBM's ViaVoice.

Above left: Blaupunkt's TravelPilot RNS 149 CD receiver has a CD player and AM-FM tuner, plus navigation technology that provides spoken turn-by-turn direction to any U.S. street address or point of interest ($1800). Above: MGA Entertainment's CommandoBot is a voice-controlled robot that can be trained to follow 12 programmed directives or ones you create yourself ($100).

WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 166.

Grapevine

© JAMES SMEAL/GALELLA LTD

Songbird Flies

With *Mirrorball* at double platinum and Lilith Fair behind her, SARAH MCLACHLAN can expect new highs. One, *Lilith '99*, the documentary film, and two, this dress.

DENNIS VAN TINE/LONDON FEATURES

A Hunk of Burning Love

Ah, COURTNEY. Fresh from *Man on the Moon*, she's going to play Joan Burroughs (wife of *Naked Lunch*'s William) in *Beat*. She's showing her assets.

© DOUGLAS STEGLEITER

Back at Ya

JENNIFER FLORES, cover model for Hawaii's Exotic Girls 2000 calendar, has also graced covers of *Lowrider* magazine. *Grapevine* has her covered, too.

STEVE TORRES

The Bee's Knees

Fitness model SONIA FITCH has passed through crowd scenes in *Liberty Heights* and *Random Hearts*. She didn't get past us.

He's No Loser, Baby

BECK is no flash in the pan. The critical acclaim for *Midnite Vultures* makes the old hoopla over *Loser* and *Odelay* all the sweeter. Catch him funking it up onstage this summer after he checks out Japan.

BIRCH PHOTOGRAPHY

© TOTO ROBERT MATHEU

The Arresting Ms. Delaney

Going undercover with Detective Russell finds KIM DELANEY and *NYPD Blue*'s return to prime time solid and her dress choice perfect.

© GILBERT FLORES/CELEBRITY PHOTO

Uncovering Stephanie's Good Points

STEPHANIE ANGELINI has been an *Easy Rider* cover girl and an extra on *Silk Stalkings* and *Renegade*. Now she's a pleasure for us to look at.

Potpourri

CORKER OF A CLUB

For those of you who prefer to learn about wine in the comfort of your home (as opposed to a restaurant with some waiter watching your every move), wine.com offers the Wines of the World club. At a price of $39.50 to $114.50 per month, you'll receive doorstep delivery of up to six bottles of red and white vino from France, Italy and other countries around the globe. Included with each monthly shipment are detailed tasting notes for the wines, along with information about and maps of the region where they were made. Sign up at wine.com.

JOHN SCHNEIDER

FORMULA FOR WINNING

The Formula One Pack, with its myriad photos, illustrations, pop-ups, booklets and other elements (including a CD of racing sounds), is guaranteed to transport track fans to Grand Prix heaven. Adam Cooper, a Formula One journalist, and Ron van der Meer, who owns a publishing company that specializes in three-dimensional books, created the Pack. Pictured here: a Ferrari F 300. Price is $50; available from Abbeville Press at 800-ARTBOOK.

ART FOR THE BEACH

It takes Hulalounge about four weeks to create a bathing suit such as the Hemi (pictured at left), and whoever buys the finished product owns "wearable bikini art," according to partners Joe Clary and Robert Freeman. Their unusual resin bathing suits can be chrome plated, as the one here is. Tops come in B and C cups and the thong has a chrome chain that adjusts to fit. Yes, the metal string takes some getting used to. And the material probably cooks in the sun. But fashionistas are used to choosing form over function. Besides, it's art. Prices begin at $2200; custom work ups the ante. Check hulalounge.com or call 760-736-2546 for more information.

LET THE SCARY TIMES ROLL

Cedar Point, in Sandusky, Ohio, is home to 13 other roller coasters, but none compares to number 14, Millennium Force, which debuts May 13. Billed as a "gigacoaster" (it's 310 feet high), Millennium Force transports tiered riders at speeds upwards of 92 miles per hour (a world record). After a gut-wrenching 310-foot climb, the coaster plunges down a 300-foot drop at 80 degrees followed by a 169-foot turn that overbanks at a 122-degree angle. Then comes a tunnel, a lagoon and a 182-foot plunge to a small wooded island (squirrels beware!). There, more turns and more overbanks await, including a sensation that coaster freaks call "airtime." The Millennium Force track measures 6595 feet. Total terror time: 2:45. Only the strong survive.

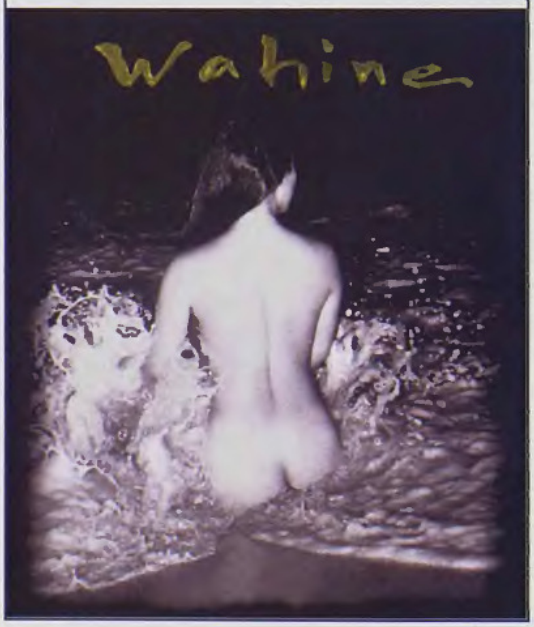
SO PEACEFUL IN THE COUNTRY

Barbara and René Stoeltie, authors of *Country Houses of France*, have completed a second book, *Country Houses of England*. Enjoy these hardcovers with a glass of wine and relax as you're transported to a château in Picardy and a keeper's lodge in Wiltshire. Forthcoming titles include Russia, Spain and Holland. Price: $30.

ROBERT PASSANTINO

HAWAIIAN LOVE SONG

Kim Taylor Reece has been called Hawaii's foremost fine-art photographer. A previous book, *Hula Kahiko: Images of Hawaii's Ancient Dance*, captures the passion of the hula. His second book, *Wahine*, features nude studies of beautiful South Pacific Island women. Black-and-white images add to the allure. Available from kimtaylorreece.com or by calling 800-657-7966; the price is $40.



JOHN O'BRIEN

OH FUDGE!

Fudge Fatale is a handmade chocolate confection that contains no preservatives, emulsifiers, thickeners or artificial flavors. "It's the chocolate to die for," says Alexander Black, a Hollywood cinematographer whose company, Alexander's Famous Foods, manufactures the fudge. Prices range from $8.25 for four pieces to $27.75 for 16. Fudge Fatale is shipped in handsome velvet boxes, as shown. Call 888-923-8343 or check out fudgefatale.com.

JOIN THE LADIES

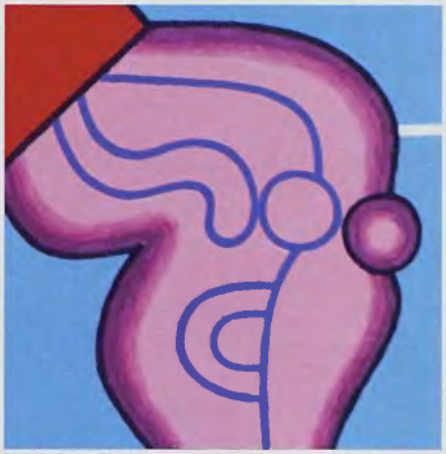
LTE Auto Art, a company we featured several months ago that specializes in reproductions of vintage automotive posters, has expanded its repertoire to include gorgeous women in poster art. An original of the Italian perfume company poster pictured here would cost thousands. LTE's price is $73 for an 18″x24″ version (other sizes are available). More than three dozen alternatives are included in LTE Auto Art's full-color catalog. For a free copy call 650-299-9255, or look at LTE's website at lteautoart.com.

HANSEN IS AS HANSEN DOES

Hansen's Signature Sodas won a recent American Tasting Institute Best of Show Gold Medal Taste Award in a blind evaluation against other natural sodas. After a few swigs of its ginger beer, sarsaparilla, vanilla cream and orange cream flavors, we understand why. This stuff is good, and it's free of sodium, preservatives and caffeine. Price: about $1.50 each, in bottles that look so good you'll want to display them. Hansens.com has more info.

Next Month

PMOY 2000



SUPERATHLETE

ANGEL OR DEVIL?

OPA!

PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR—MISS MAY? MISS FEBRUARY? MISS NOVEMBER? MISS MARCH? IS THAT YOUR FINAL ANSWER? AN ALL-NEW HIGH-WATTAGE LAYOUT STARRING THE FIRST PMOY OF THE MILLENNIUM

BOND FOREVER—THIS SALUTE TO THE ULTIMATE LADIES' MAN—AND HIS LADIES—IS GUARANTEED TO SHAKE AND STIR. INCLUDED: PLAYBOY'S 40-YEAR RELATIONSHIP WITH IAN FLEMING'S SUPERHERO, THE BEST BOOKS AND MOVIES AND THE SECRET TO 007'S ENDURANCE. BY **JAMES R. PETERSEN**

DOUBLESHOT—AN EXCERPT FROM **RAYMOND BENSON'S** NEW BOND ADVENTURE, WHICH FINDS 007 ON A TRAIN FROM TANGIER TO MARRAKECH IN A DIZZYING RENDEZVOUS WITH GORGEOUS TWINS. SOUND LIKE ANYONE WE KNOW?

TREY PARKER AND MATT STONE—THE GUYS BEHIND *SOUTH PARK* ARE HAVING A MIDLIFE CRISIS. AS SELF-PROCLAIMED HOLLYWOOD OUTSIDERS, THEY DON'T CARE WHO THEY OFFEND, INCLUDING ROBERT REDFORD, BARBRA STREISAND, GEORGE LUCAS AND STING. AN OUTRAGEOUS PLAYBOY INTERVIEW BY **STEVE POND**

SURFING THE WEB FOR CONTRABAND—IF IT'S ILLEGAL—AK-47S, CUBAN CIGARS, ECSTASY, POT, BOOTLEG MOVIES, PROSTITUTES—IT'S ONLY A MOUSE CLICK AWAY. EXPLORE THE UNDERBELLY OF THE INTERNET AND FIND OUT HOW THE GUYS IN WASHINGTON ARE TRYING TO NAIL THE PERPS. BY **MARK EHRMAN**

ENABLER—"RELAX. LIE DOWN. LET THE TENSION DRAIN FROM YOUR FACE AND NECK." WHETHER YOU THINK SHE'S A MIRACULOUS ANGEL OR A SLUT, SHE'LL CURE YOUR PROBLEMS WITH SEX. FICTION BY *FIGHT CLUB* AUTHOR **CHUCK PALAHNIUK**

THE NEW SUPERATHLETE—MARK MCGWIRE'S 70 HOMERS? THAT'S KID STUFF. SPORTS HAVE NEVER HAD SO MANY HUGE, MULTITALENTED PLAYERS. WHAT PART DO EVOLUTION, TRAINING, DIET, COACHING, STEROIDS AND SPORTS MEDICINE PLAY? PLUS: WHY YOUR SON COULD BE THE NEXT MICHAEL JORDAN. BY **ALLEN BARRA**

HOW TO HAVE THE PERFECT RELATIONSHIP—THERE ARE SEVEN RULES FOR LASTING LOVE (E.G., NEVER HAVE SEX ON A FIRST DATE, ALWAYS LET THE WOMAN COME FIRST, NEVER KISS AND TELL). GOT IT NOW? HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD BREAK EVERY RULE. ARTICLE BY **STEVEN SLON**

DIGITAL DESTINY—JETSONESQUE MP3 PLAYERS, CELL PHONES WITH MINI TV'S, AND STEREOS THAT HANG ON THE WALL. A FIRST LOOK AT THE GADGETS THAT WILL BE EVERYWHERE BEFORE YEAR'S END

PLUS: LITTLE ANNIE FANNY—THE GREAT SWIMSUIT SHOOT, WOMEN OF THE GREEK ISLES, SUMMER RIDES THAT WILL LEAVE 'EM IN THE DUST, DAD AND GRAD GIFTS FOR THE NEW CENTURY, DAVE'S GARAGE AND LOUISIANA'S SAUCY PLAYMATE, **SHANNON STEWART**

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